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ROOSEVELT:  
DICTATOR OR DEMOCRAT  
?



# ROOSEVELT: DICTATOR OR DEMOCRAT ?

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ROOSEVELT: DICTATOR OR DEMOCRAT?

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*TO EVERY MAN  
WHO CAST AN HONEST VOTE FOR WILLKIE  
THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED  
WITH RESPECT*





ROOSEVELT:  
DICTATOR OR DEMOCRAT  
?





## CHAPTER I

**F**RANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT will continue as President of the United States—disregarding unpredictable acts of God or of the common enemy—at least until January 20, 1945.

As regards twenty-seven million of the country's fifty million voters, this is entirely satisfactory. They planned it that way. But there are twenty-two million whose only recourse is to make the best of it, for they planned otherwise. They preferred to have another man in the White House, and indicated their choice at the polls in November, 1940.

Ordinarily, this would not justify extended comment. The American electoral system envisages the defeat of at least one party in every contest. It is assumed that the defeated party will remain in opposition during the ensuing term, scrutinizing every move of the administration, alert to seize upon, capitalize, and exploit to the limit all its mistakes, swift to proclaim with the voice of Stentor the heinousness of its crimes. This may not be an ideal system, but it has worked reasonably well for a hundred and fifty years and is accepted as natural and right by most Americans.

But these are not ordinary times. As Mr. Roosevelt's third

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term began it was already apparent that the old rules are no longer applicable to the new situation. Events beyond our borders and far beyond our control are depriving the supporters of Mr. Willkie of some of the rights and privileges usually appertaining to their status as the defeated party. In the face of a foreign menace, it is the American tradition to support the President, regardless of his party. In such circumstances, most men prefer to speak softly even of domestic policies with which they disagree; for when the country's existence is threatened, it is more important to preserve unity than it is to correct governmental errors.

It is evident, therefore, that Willkie men are now existing in a state of suppression, which is only too likely to continue for a long time. It is not legal suppression. There has been no occasion for anything of that kind. The moment the election was decided the great bulk of the opposition, starting with its leader, accepted the decision in good faith and prepared to support the administration as against all foreign opponents. But the fact that the suppression is voluntary does not alter its character. Indeed, the voluntary suppression of one's impulses may be a much more severe psychological strain than their suppression by outside force.

All things considered, the position of those Americans who cast an honest vote for Wendell Willkie in the election of 1940 is not altogether happy. Their loyalty to the country compels them to support Mr. Roosevelt, and they are doing it, resolutely; yet not without qualms. Any consideration that tends to reduce those qualms ought to be, therefore, not only a

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welcome relief to honest men in a difficult position, but to some extent a contribution to national unity.

This purpose would certainly not be served by a partisan argument in behalf of the New Deal. The season for partisan argument ended on November 6, 1940. But there is another objection to that sort of argument at this time. It is irrelevant. Mr. Roosevelt is no longer primarily the exponent of a particular philosophy of government applying to the domestic affairs of the United States. He lost that position with the outbreak of the European war, and became—had to become, regardless of his personal preferences—the spokesman of this country to the rest of the world.

The details of Mr. Roosevelt's record as the leader of an American political party have, therefore, lost some of their importance as guides to his future course. As his third term opened, he faced exigencies differing in their nature, as well as in their urgency, from those that he faced as his first and second terms opened. He must perforce adapt his methods to meet these different pressures, and the fact that he took a certain course when the banking system collapsed in 1933 is no indication that he will take the same, or a recognizably similar course when a battle line collapses in the future. His friends must admit that his successes in the past constitute no guarantee of comparable successes in the future; but his foes should realize, and admit at least to themselves, that what they regard as his failures in the past are no proof that he will fail again in a radically different situation.

Study of the career of President Roosevelt up to 1941, to be productive of any reliable indication of the probable course

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of the future, should not concern itself too much with detail. Detail is sure to be altered, probably beyond recognition, in the new situation. But the broad outlines, the main trends, will persist. What Roosevelt did on this date, and what he omitted to do on that may, or may not, be significant as to the future; but his general course throughout the past eight years is bound to be significant. In the first place, for a man to effect a radical alteration of his habits of thought at the age of fifty-eight is a phenomenon so rare as to be almost unheard-of; and in the second place, the incalculable pressures of history and associations would combine to hold him to the same general course, even if some revolutionary change of personality should occur.

Indeed, it is the supposed trend of the Rooseveltian philosophy, rather than details of the Rooseveltian record that disturbs the minds of those who opposed him last year. Details may arouse opposition, irritation, anger, but not deep anxiety. For instance, the spending policy of the Roosevelt administrations is one of those most widely opposed; but, curiously, it is not the loss of the money that has aroused the deepest opposition. Americans, contrary to widespread European opinion, do not make a fetish of money, probably because money has been relatively easy to make in this country. Take away an American's money and you arouse his wrath, to be sure, but he seldom feels that you have taken his very heart's blood, because as a rule he is pretty sure that he can make more money.

The mere fact that Roosevelt has spent many billions disturbs his opponents only moderately. It is the way he has

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spent it that accounts for the deep anxiety. This is evidenced by the fact that when he began to spend at an enormously accelerated rate for battleships, military planes and other implements of war that course aroused no desperate fears. We are accustomed to spending for munitions. We do not like it, but we are not unduly afraid of it, because we have undergone that sort of thing before, and it is free of the terror of the unknown.

But the spending that preceded the armament program was for purposes that seemed to many of us entirely new developments of the American theory of government. The money cost was unpleasant, but merely unpleasant. What was terrifying was the impression, held by many men every whit as humane as Mr. Roosevelt, that the underlying purpose was to effect a change in the direction of American political development. Sincere and honest people suspected a design to alter not only the status but the character of the American citizen. What direction this alteration was to take they did not clearly understand. Whether the proletarian was to be reduced to serfdom, or to be raised to dictatorship, was a matter of debate, but the point was that he was to remain no longer American in the old sense. This was far more serious than the expenditure of any number of dollars, for dollars can always be replaced, but not the spirit of a free people.

So with the other conspicuous policies of the New Deal. Mr. Roosevelt's attacks on privilege were heartily approved, as attacks on privilege. But there was, certainly as late as the recent campaign, and probably to this day, an uneasy suspicion that his expulsion of the money-changers from the

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temple, although praiseworthy in itself, was being accomplished, not so much to get rid of the money-changers, as to make room for the erection of an altar to an unknown god; and this was terrifying.

The New Deal has been conspicuously pro-labor. In this there is nothing unprecedented. We have had many governments, especially State and municipal governments, that were frankly pro-labor, and even those who believe that the New Deal has gone too far readily grant that no government in a democracy should be anti-labor. Even if Mr. Roosevelt's labor policy had unquestionably resulted in making wages too high and hours too short, most Americans would have been inclined to call it an error in the right direction. The trouble was that many honest men conceived the idea that this was not simply a further development of a long trend in American history, but a departure from the line of that development—that the idea was not simply to cause American workers to be well paid for only reasonably hard work, but to erect the class of workingmen into a privileged class, having domination over the rest of us; and this was terrifying.

In short, the thing that really troubles the honest opponents of the President is not so much the specific acts of the past eight years as the suspicion that they represent a break with American tradition. These people do not perceive clearly any integration of the New Deal with American history, so it is doubtless inevitable that they should suspect that there is no vital connection, and that the regime that came into power in 1933 represents something alien to the spirit of the republic as it existed from 1787 to 1932.

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Without doubt, the growth of this suspicion has been assisted by some of the President's enthusiastic friends. Mr. Roosevelt has a marvelous capacity to inspire enthusiasm—an attribute highly valuable to a leader, but bearing perils as well as advantages. Some Rooseveltians have never ceased emphasizing the differences between this President and all his predecessors and have ended by creating the impression that he is a prophet of the order of Melchizedek indeed, in that he is without precedent or predecessor, but not assuring all of us that he is of the same order in the matter of divine inspiration.

Naturally, the President's enemies have lost no opportunity to deny that his ideas have any legitimate connection with American tradition. Thus incautious friends and alert foes have worked together to further the belief that here is a new departure, not a further development of old American doctrine, but the introduction of a body of dogma entirely different from it if not, indeed, antithetical to it.

This procedure is, of course, familiar enough in practical politics. It is highly effective strategy to convince the world that one's opponent is a Sassenach, an outlander, something unheard-of and probably monstrous. It has been customary ever since the Jeffersonians accused John Adams of being a monarchist, and the Federalists accused Jefferson of favoring the nationalization of women. Ordinarily, it does little permanent damage because the poison carries its own antidote; in the course of time the charges neutralize each other.

But in the existing crisis we cannot rely upon the medication of time, for the sort of opposition that is based upon

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the supposition that the President has introduced into the political game not merely a New Deal, but a new deck, is a paralyzing opposition. As against a foreign adversary, Americans can usually support resolutely even one whom they regard as a pretty bad American, for we prefer almost any sort of American to an alien dictator. As we move into the obscure and difficult period ahead, few among us will feel their courage shaken by charges that our leader is full of typically American faults; we know those faults of old, and in dealing with them we do not require the assistance of any of Hitler's blacksmiths.

To perceive Mr. Roosevelt in a logical relation with his predecessors in the White House would, therefore, afford no small relief to many men who have opposed him. It would not necessarily convert them into supporters of his domestic policies, for a man, or a policy, or a philosophy may be American without necessarily being right. However, to the extent that it can be shown that the New Deal is a natural, not to say inevitable, development of the American democratic process, it will be stripped of the terror that attends the unknown, and its honest opponents can rally with quieter minds to defend it against the outside world.

Any attempt to integrate President Roosevelt's record with those of his predecessors must begin with certain stipulations. One is the stipulation that he is an unusual President. This is not likely to be denied by anyone; for those who think him a little higher than Washington, and those who think him a little lower than Caligula both heartily agree that he is not on a level with such men as Franklin Pierce and Chester A. Arthur.



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The thirty-two men who have held that office have had astonishingly few traits in common. Each of them has been financially honest. Even in the administrations of Grant and Harding, when scandal climbed highest, it did not touch the President himself. Each of them has respected the standards of decorum governing the highest office. Even Andrew Jackson, the most violent—although not by any means the crudest—man who ever occupied the White House, maintained in office a personal dignity that impressed, and sometimes astonished, foreign visitors—for example, Harriet Martineau and Fanny Kemble—whose previous experience had made them competent judges of good manners. But when you have said that all Mr. Roosevelt's predecessors were honest, and all were gentlemen, you have said very nearly everything that can be said of all of them.

The flat truth is that less than a third of the whole number were really memorable men. But it would be folly to undertake to integrate the career of any strong President with those of the unimpressive majority. It may be conceded at once that it is beyond the power of sophistry to make Franklin D. Roosevelt bear any marked resemblance to Coolidge, McKinley, Benjamin Harrison, Arthur, Hayes, Buchanan, Fillmore, Pierce, Polk, Tyler, or Monroe, not to mention Harding and Grant. If he fits into any succession, it must be the succession of exceptional men, which is a much shorter line.

The strong Presidents themselves are divided into two groups, the conservative and the liberal, and it is equally obvious that Mr. Roosevelt does not belong to the conservative group, in the sense in which that word is commonly

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understood. The most powerful of the conservatives were Washington, John Adams, Johnson and Cleveland; it would be a difficult task to show that Mr. Roosevelt's intellectual and moral processes are to any striking extent comparable to those of the four men named. The strong Presidents commonly described as liberal are more numerous. Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson fall into that category, and if the argument as to the second Roosevelt's Americanism is to be sustained, it must be by reference to these men, rather than to the whole group.

I have employed the words "conservative" and "liberal" for lack of terms more precise in meaning. I am aware that both words have been worn so smooth by constant use and almost as constant misapplication that they have become tricky. If a conservative is a man who conserves, then Lincoln was the greatest of conservatives, because he conserved the Union itself. If a liberal is a man who liberates, then where shall we classify Theodore Roosevelt, whose reputation rests in the main on his efforts to shackle huge economic forces with the chains of the law?

As a matter of fact, the second Roosevelt's own creed is conspicuously that of a conservative. In the general introduction to Judge Rosenman's edition of his *Public Papers and Addresses* he wrote, "Consistently I have sought to maintain a comprehensive and efficient functioning of the representative form of democratic government in its modern sense. Consistently I have sought through that form of government to help our people to gain a larger social justice." Mr. Roosevelt may have been deceiving himself, of course, but the aims he

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has stated are certainly conservative aims, in that they tend, not to demolish and remove, but to strengthen and stabilize the existing order.

There is no longer much doubt that each of the early liberals left the republic more firmly established than he found it. Jefferson came to power at a moment when a serious revolt was plainly brewing; when he left office there were still malcontents, but they were confined to a minority that was diminishing, and that, indeed, extinguished itself as a formidable political power five years later, in the Hartford Convention. Jackson came to power under similar circumstances, but when he left office both Nullification, center of political, and the Bank, center of economic revolt, had been wiped out. The case of Lincoln is too obvious to require comment. Certainly in these three cases, liberalism was the force that preserved the existing order and conservatism was the force that threatened its destruction. Mr. Roosevelt's friends have always contended that his policies, too, have been, in this sense profoundly conservative.

The average man, however, is not disposed to quibble over precise meanings. He has a reasonably clear conception in his own mind of what the words "liberal" and "conservative" mean to him, nor does he cherish any doubt that Roosevelt belongs to the liberal group; or, at any rate, he is certain beyond any doubt that he does not belong to the conservative group. Even those opponents of the President who are so violent that they are unwilling to classify him with Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, not to mention Lincoln and Jefferson, will agree that it would be even more preposterous

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to try to classify him with Coolidge and Taft. In short, Mr. Roosevelt emphatically is not the sort of President the ordinary American has in mind when he refers to the conservatives. Of necessity, then, he is either a liberal, or he is something new, a *tertium quid* without precedent in our political history.

A second stipulation essential to any coherent argument as to Mr. Roosevelt's Americanism is agreement that he is the leader of an exceptionally profound and powerful popular movement. The mere fact that he, alone among the Presidents, has been elected to the office three times is enough to settle that. As a matter of fact, though, there is ample evidence that the upheaval that brought him to power originally is not an exclusively American phenomenon. One may disagree with all the rest of Mrs. Anne Morrow Lindbergh's argument, but a rational man can hardly deny that the whole world seems to be inundated by a wave of some kind, whether or not it is accurately described as "the wave of the future."

No such tidal sweep was behind Wilson, in 1912, or Theodore Roosevelt, in 1904. Both represented strong popular movements, of a similar character, but not movements that shook the very foundations of society. It is necessary to go further back in our history to find anything really comparable to the turbulence of recent years—certainly as far back as Lincoln, perhaps back to Jackson and Jefferson. This tends to cloud one's judgment, for something more than superficial knowledge of American history is requisite to comparison

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with conditions so far removed in time. Many men remember the campaign of 1912, and large numbers who are by no means ready to call themselves old remember that of 1904; but few are they who were alive during the campaign of 1860, and very few those who were old enough to know what was going on; while no man now living can remember the campaign of 1828. Yet thoroughly to understand Roosevelt's record it should be compared to records made under comparable conditions; and no stresses fairly to be compared with those of the present have existed in many decades.

There was a war in Wilson's time, to be sure; but there was no war in 1932 and there was no war in 1912. The crisis that Roosevelt faced in 1932 bears less similarity to that which Wilson faced or to that which Lincoln faced than to those that confronted Jefferson and Jackson.

It may be argued with great plausibility that Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt both had much more to do with the creation of the movement that each led than had Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln or Franklin D. Roosevelt. The popular indignation behind Wilson and the first Roosevelt was genuine enough, but it was a reasoned wrath, based on intellectual processes. The bulk of it came from a comparison made by the farm populations of the West and South between their condition and that of the industrial East; and a comparison made by labor of the proportion of the income from industry that went into wages with that that went into profits. The masses who marched under the standards of these leaders consisted, for the most part, of men who were angry because they believed that they had been swindled, and who had

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arrived at that belief by the exercise of their reasoning powers.

The same processes were operative in 1932, of course, but there was more behind the movement than merely the discontent of men who think themselves the victims of favoritism. In 1932 indignation was reinforced with despair. The judges who were dragged off the bench by Middle Western mobs were not themselves the objects of suspicion. The mobs realized that the law required the judges to issue writs that would deprive farmers of their land. The violence that was offered the judges consisted only in their removal from the bench; the wrath of the people was directed, not at the judges, but at the law.

Popular uprisings are familiar enough in our political history. It is part of the technique of every campaign to assert the existence of an uprising, and the party out of power makes every effort to create one. But these uprisings are directed against men, or groups, or organizations that are supposed to have evaded the law or perverted it to their own uses. The uprisings, therefore, have what military men call a limited objective—to eject the rascals and to restore the law to its purity. These affairs are usually annoying to the party in power and they may inflict serious damage upon it; but they are thoroughly understood, and so are the methods of meeting them. Therefore the emotional reaction against them is confined to irritation with, perhaps, some degree of apprehension, when they seem likely to succeed; but they do not arouse bewilderment and wild terror. In 1932, however, when it became clear that the blind fury of

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the dispossessed was striking, not at individuals, but at the very system of law itself, panic swept through those classes that found the existing system tolerable, if not perfect.

It was a new experience to this generation. The American people had exhibited no such mood within the memory of living men, and the common assumption was that it had never exhibited any such mood in its history. But the national history of the American people is longer than any man's memory. Before one is justified in declaring flatly that the upheaval from which the New Deal acquired its momentum has no precedent, it is necessary to examine the records of those times that witnessed the most powerful upheavals of the past. No argument is needed to persuade an American of this generation that the disturbance attending the New Deal eclipsed that connected with Wilson's New Freedom, the first Roosevelt's Square Deal, and all of the predominantly agrarian movements typified in Bryan's Populism. cursory examination of the records furnishes strong, if not conclusive, evidence, that the masses of the people had not been so profoundly stirred since the sixties, and possibly not since Jackson's day, or even Jefferson's.

What occurred under the presidencies of Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln is, however, not merely part and parcel of the American tradition, but the very framework of that tradition, giving it shape and direction. To the extent, therefore, that the popular movement under Roosevelt is roughly similar to these earlier movements, it is certainly not unprecedented, even though nothing comparable to it has occurred in two generations. To the extent that it follows the same direction

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followed by these earlier movements it may reasonably be regarded as a prolongation of the line that represents the development of American democracy.

This is not, in itself, an argument in favor of the New Deal. There are those—Henry Adams is a conspicuous example—who have believed that the entire progression of democracy has been a process of degeneration—"degradation" was Adams' word. These may grant the Americanism of the latest development and still oppose it without inconsistency; for if Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln marked successive downward steps, then, without doubt, if the second Roosevelt is in the same line, he marks the lowest level as yet reached.

But the establishment of a logical relation between this movement and others of comparable magnitude in the past, while it would not necessarily establish the desirability of this one, would strip it of the terror that clings to the unprecedented and the unknown. This accomplishment might not convert a single Republican into a Democrat, but it would reassure a great many men who greatly need reassurance as they face the genuinely un-American and genuinely unprecedented menaces that all too evidently crowd the immediate future. In one of his rare indulgences in epigram Herbert Hoover declared, half a dozen years ago, "a good many things go around in the dark besides Santa Claus." Therein he expressed a profound conviction which has troubled and still troubles vast numbers of loyal and patriotic Americans. By all means, then, let us have a little light from our own history; but let us seek it where it is to be found, not in the chronicles of the last twenty or thirty years, but in those of



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times that compare with our own in the distresses and the restlessness of the masses of our people.

No more knowledge of American history than may be obtained from a good college text-book is enough to correct the false idea that the development of the democratic process has proceeded in an even flow. Every well-informed man is aware that it has been characterized by oscillation between radicalism and reaction, between progress and retrogression; we are perpetually moving forward to the New Freedom with some Wilson, or back to normalcy with some Harding. This wave-like motion of history is too obvious to have escaped anyone's attention.

Observation a little more careful, however, is required to disclose the fact that under this surface oscillation there is a second motion, also characterized by surges that suggest waves, but differing from the first in that its upheavals are followed by relatively little ebbing. Much of Theodore Roosevelt's work was undone under Taft, much of Wilson's under Harding; but the essential changes introduced under Jefferson have never been reversed, nor those introduced under Jackson and Lincoln. Each of these men was not merely an innovator in his own right, but each came to the Presidency on the crest of a tremendous upsurge from the depths, a genuine "wave of the future."

The surface oscillation commonly absorbs the attention of politicians, in the first place because it is more frequent than the other, and, in the second place, because it is powerful enough to smash administrations, perhaps even parties. But

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the second sort of movement, although less frequent and less obvious, is powerful enough to smash governments. It is frequently described as revolutionary, but it is a description that should be accepted with caution, for it does not develop explosive force until it encounters a rigid obstruction. The singular good fortune of the United States provided it, at the moment when each of the first three of these upheavals swept into our history, with a national leader able and energetic enough to blast rigid obstructions out of the way and let the tide run free. The result is that the United States has survived at least three crises, every one of which contained enough potentially explosive force to wreck any country. Perhaps one of the essential differences between a politician and a statesman is the ability of the latter to distinguish between the movement of surface billows and that of the tide; or, to borrow from Mrs. Lindbergh again, between the wave of the moment and the wave of the future.

It may be that, as William Allen White has suggested, Gutenberg is primarily responsible for the whole thing. Certainly the operation of a modern democracy in an illiterate population is unimaginable, for it is through reading that the people by slow degrees gain an appreciation of their power when they are united. Widespread literacy, again, is to a considerable extent a function of the machine age, for two reasons; first, because the application of mechanical power to the manufacture of paper and ink and to the operation of presses brought reading-matter within the reach of everyone, and, second, because artificial light, a product of

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the machine age, has increased the number of hours in which it is possible to read.

It is true that democracy has not always kept pace with literacy. For many years Germany and Japan have been among the most highly literate nations. But it is also true that democracy has operated badly and has advanced slowly where the illiteracy rate is high. The speculation upon abstract rights that leads to the formulation of concrete demands is not likely to flourish among men so unlettered that what passes beyond the horizon is totally unknown to them. It is the printed word, made easily available by mechanical power that has informed the people, both of their power acting in concert and of what they may hope to achieve by such action; and it is knowledge of their power and their desires that has incited them to the uprisings that have counted.

We have been tinkering with our government continuously. Hardly a day has passed since the adoption of the Constitution that has not witnessed the projection of some scheme for its alteration. Every law passed by Congress, their number now running into the tens of thousands, represents, at least in theory, an effort toward the perfecting of the democratic process, which is to say an alteration of some detail of the government. In addition to Congress, forty-eight State Legislatures multiply the number of new statutes, if not exactly by forty-eight yet certainly by a large figure. In addition to Congress and the State Legislatures, the courts, both State and Federal, are constantly giving to existing law new interpretations which, in the opinion of most students of jurisprudence, have the effect of new statutes. Finally, from the very

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beginning, to some extent, and with increasing frequency within recent years, government departments and independent agencies have been issuing rules and regulations with statutory force.

Indeed, one of the charges most frequently and most furiously brought against the Roosevelt administration is the allegation that under it no man knows what is the law, because it shifts bewilderingly from day to day. A disinterested observer is bound to admit that there is validity in this charge. There is an answer to it, of course, but the answer is essentially a plea in confession and avoidance—a claim that the shifts in the law are necessitated by a rapidly shifting situation, which is not a denial that the uncertainty of which men complain really exists.

Nevertheless, most of us are aware that all this kaleidoscopic movement is confined to details, many of them superficial details. Even changes as violent and far-reaching as the adoption, and then the repudiation, of the policy of national prohibition do not affect basically the development of the democratic process. Yet the fact that this process has changed, and the extent of the change is vividly illustrated by a comparison of two quotations. Alexander Hamilton held it a prime, not to say the first duty of any administration to “make it the immediate interest of the moneyed men to cooperate with the government.” This is less brutally frank than John Jay’s declaration that “those who own the country ought to govern it,” but it is of the same order of political thought. Compare it with this remark of Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Our government is not the master, but the creature of

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the people. The duty of the state toward the citizens is the duty of the servant to its master. The people have created it; the people, by common consent, permit its continued existence."

Neither utterance was oracular. Hamilton had contemporaries who rejected his authority, not as a statesman, only, but as a political philosopher, also. So has Roosevelt. Making due allowance for opposition in both cases, it is fair to say that Hamilton's utterance came as close to representing official doctrine between 1787 and 1800 as Roosevelt's represented official doctrine between 1932 and 1940. The distance between the two doctrines, then, is a fair measure of the distance that the democratic process had covered between the dates of their promulgation.

One who contends that this progression is not the result of the oscillation between radical and reactionary—Wilson to Harding, Theodore Roosevelt to Taft, Bryan to Alton B. Parker, John W. Davis to Al Smith—nor the result of the incessant tinkering of lawmakers, judges and bureaucrats, should not stop with that denial. If not through these forces, then when and how came the real progress—or retrogression, if you see it as a backward movement?

No answer can be flat and definite, as well as truthful, because the analysis of really great popular movements is a tricky and uncertain business. Rough approximations only can be made with any confidence; they are pinned down with the date of some event which is more likely to represent the culmination than the beginning of the movement. A certain perspective is requisite to make even these approxima-

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tions quite plain, but there are at least three of them which are so far in the past that they can be seen plainly. These are the first election of Thomas Jefferson, in 1800; the first election of Andrew Jackson, in 1828; and the first election of Abraham Lincoln, in 1860. Perhaps the fourth was the first election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1932, but that remains to be established, whereas about the three earlier ones there is no doubt.

Now Mr. Jefferson, General Jackson and Mr. Lincoln were all great men, which means that they were many-sided personalities, terrifically energetic and absorbingly interesting. They did so many things, and such spectacular things, that it is difficult to withdraw attention from their activities to concentrate it on the vague and amorphous popular movements which they began by representing and ended by directing and, to an astonishing extent, controlling. For the purposes of this study, however, it is essential to do exactly that. For the purposes of this study, the Louisiana Purchase, the Nullification Proclamation, and even the Civil War are merely corroborative detail, significant only as illustrations clarifying the main theme.

In the case of Jefferson, for example, the significant thing, so far as the development of the democratic process in America is concerned, was his election. His subsequent career, including his re-election, merely justified the theory on which the original action was taken. That action was nothing less than the abrogation of what was regarded as one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution. This was the institution of the Electoral College, which had been

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established for the purpose of preventing the people from choosing their own President.

Professor Edward S. Corwin, certainly one of the leading authorities on the presidency, can see no reason why the Electoral College was given its peculiar shape unless it was a curious belief that George Washington would live practically forever. That would explain the facts, but so would a parallel belief, indubitably held by some of the fifty-five men who made the Constitution, that the republic would not live forever, nor even very long. Washington was fifty-five years old in 1787, but at that there were those who considered it highly probable that he would out-live the United States.

In any event, the Constitutional Convention spent a great deal of time—Corwin says as much time as was given to any other single problem—devising a method to take the election of the chief magistrate out of the hands of the mob without eliminating entirely the republican character of the government. The method chosen was ingenious, but impractical, because the problem was insoluble. The ingenious method collapsed in the first real election; for the formal installation of Washington was not so much an election as the acceptance of the inevitable. The first genuine election came in 1796, when John Adams was chosen; and before that was decided it was plain that the ingenious scheme had gone to pieces.

This first election, however, was decided by the scheming of politicians. It demonstrated the futility of expecting the electors to be free agents, but it did not determine from whom they should take their orders. In 1796 the Electoral College was split up among the adherents of various political

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leaders, but none of these leaders had made a conspicuously successful appeal to the people for their backing. That came in 1800, when Thomas Jefferson demonstrated that the man whom the voters desired could not safely be ignored by the electors. The demonstration, incidentally, came perilously close to justifying the gloomiest prophecies of Hamilton and other anti-democrats, for there was a moment when it seemed likely that the outcome would be the election, not of the democrat, Jefferson, but of the demagogue, Burr. The threat arose, however, not from the participation of the people in the election, but from the clumsiness of the machinery through which they had to express their will. Nobody really believed that the country had voted for Burr, and Hamilton performed the most patriotic service of his career when he repudiated the pettifogging of his fellow-partisans and demanded that the will of the majority be registered.

The first election of Thomas Jefferson involved vastly more than this, of course, but the point to be emphasized here is that in 1800 it became clear that in the last analysis the choice of the people, and not that of the electors, nor even that of party leaders, would determine who is to be President. In practice, of course, it has not always done so; indeed, only occasionally has it done so; but never since 1800 has it been doubted that, when they are really aroused, the people can and will make their favorite candidate President of the United States.

This was a long stride away from the republican scheme devised by the Founding Fathers. It was the first great development of the democratic process.



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The most ardent democrat must admit, however, that Demos is far from being a perfect sovereign. On the contrary, he is very much *un roi fainéant*, a sluggish king, a careless and lazy and reluctant king. He does not like to rule, and whenever the times are not too stressful he is shockingly willing to resign his authority to more energetic hands. After the election of Jefferson, Demos did not arouse and exert himself again for twenty-eight years; but when he did, he worked another revolution in our political system.

The Presidents who followed Jefferson were elected by the people, but they were not chosen by the people. They were chosen by Congress, and the last of the group, John Quincy Adams, was, in fact, elected by Congress. The process was a party caucus, attended by members of the two houses only, which put forward the candidate. The harmony of this procedure was rudely interrupted in 1824 when certain members, most of them from the West, refused to be bound by the caucus and put up a man of their own. He received a plurality both of the popular and of the electoral vote, but once more the machinery broke down and, in spite of the people's strong indication of their preference, he was not chosen. A man more acceptable to the ruling group at Washington was given the office.

It is undeniable that the following of Andrew Jackson included some of the wildest politicians the country had ever seen. Martin Van Buren, Amos Kendall, Edward Livingston and Thomas Hart Benton knew every trick in the box, and there were a dozen others hardly less competent. Jackson, himself, was far indeed from being merely the bluff and

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simple old soldier that his lieutenants portrayed and that most of his followers accepted. Jackson was capable of shrewd and tortuous political maneuvers, one of the most effective being those explosions of apparently blind fury, which were, in fact, usually carefully calculated and admirably timed.

But after all due allowance has been made for the adroitness with which his campaigns were managed, the inescapable fact remains that he had the people with him. It is likewise undeniable that at first he had nearly all the prominent politicians of the country against him. In his first campaign he was opposed, not only by Webster, Clay and Calhoun, but also by Van Buren and Benton. His own organization was good, indeed, very good; but it was not better than this opposition in the matter of political cleverness. The scale was turned by the weight of popular favor.

The importance of this lies in the fact that General Jackson was politically a rank outsider. Without going into any involved discussion of intrinsic merit, it may be stated flatly that he was not the sort of man any Congressional caucus would have put in nomination. But he was the sort of man the people liked, and it happened that when he made his second campaign, in 1828, the people were in an ugly mood. There were many reasons, but two of the most prominent were the facts that the financial power was beginning to pinch and that the claims of the growing West had been persistently and, as it seemed to the West, contemptuously ignored by the ruling oligarchy.

In any event, Jackson was swept into power by a tremendous majority, and his lieutenants promptly devised the

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national nominating convention, which was a formal recognition of the right of the people, not merely to elect, but to nominate the man of their choice.

It was the second long stride away from the Founding Fathers' conception of a republic ruled by the "best" people.

Another quarter of a century intervened between Jackson's retirement and the next great upheaval. It was a period of vast excitement, of incessant and at times tremendous political battling, and of extraordinary, probably unmatched, brilliance in Congress; but it is difficult to discover, in spite of the hubbub, any profoundly significant development of the democratic process during the reigns of what one critic has caustically described as "Van Buren and the Seven Dwarfs."

There was, however, one utterance during this period that later events proved to be more significant by far than ninety-nine hundredths of the rest of the oratory. In 1850 William H. Seward declared on the floor of the Senate, "There is a higher law than the Constitution which regulates our authority."

It was regarded at the time as an impolitic utterance, and perhaps it was. Seward was speaking as a Senator, that is, as an officer of the United States, and officers of the United States have no official or legal right to recognize any law higher than the Constitution and treaties made in accordance with it, which are, by definition, "the supreme law of the land." It is arguable that no such declaration should have been made on the floor of the United States Senate, since

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it was not true as regards Senators; but it is nevertheless profoundly true as regards citizens.

This was proved between 1860 and 1865. The demonstration was made, this time, not through peaceful political means, but by force of arms. The election of Abraham Lincoln was, in itself, a political accident. He was a minority President. But the split in the Democratic party, which made his election possible, even though his vote was a million less than a majority, was attributable directly to the people's belief that not even the Constitution can bind them to a course that they find morally repugnant.

Few modern authorities contend that Lincoln respected the Constitutional limitations upon the authority of a President. His suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* was perhaps the most flagrant, but was far from being the only instance in which he brushed aside Constitutional handicaps in pursuance of his main objective, the preservation of the Union. The Emancipation Proclamation itself was of more than doubtful legality. But Lincoln was able to issue his orders and to make them stick simply because the great bulk of his supporters believed profoundly that what he was doing, whether legal or illegal, was right. Many Americans habitually overlook the fact that the moral issue, in the 'sixties, was the preservation of the Union. On slavery there was a wide difference of opinion, even in the North; but on preservation of the Union only a few Northerners, most of them, ironically, extreme Abolitionists, were willing to compromise. Even in the South there was a strong Union party. Virginia split apart on the issue, and North Carolina and Tennessee fur-

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nished many soldiers to the Federal army. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued as a military measure; it did not free a single slave in territory within the control of the United States; it was issued in the hope of building a backfire behind the Confederate lines.

At the same time, every thoughtful man, of the North or of the South, realized that the existence of slavery was an impediment to the maintenance of the federal republic. It was struck down as a military measure, but it was kept down as part of the program that inspired the Civil War, the preservation of the Union.

In the case of this third upheaval the issue was clouded by the passions released by war. A vast number of minor, but sometimes spectacular, changes were effected by the Civil War, among them, as Roscoe Conkling confessed in 1882, the phrasing of an amendment in such a way that while it seemed to be a guarantee of human rights, it proved to be much more effective as a guarantee of corporate rights. The effects of these changes have been so important in our economic history that they have engaged the larger share of the attention of historians and students.

Nevertheless, as a stage in the progression of American political thought from Washington to the second Roosevelt, the important thing is the establishment of the people's power to abrogate any provisions of the Constitution that seem inconsistent with their welfare and happiness. What was established was the power, not the right. It is a development that has created enormous difficulty for jurisconsults, who have trouble fitting it into any sort of legal framework. The

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blithely irresponsible layman is inclined to call it an exercise of sovereignty, without undertaking to define sovereignty. In any event, what happened was this: the people found themselves facing a situation that seemed to them to threaten the destruction of the Union; under the leadership of Lincoln they proceeded to alter that situation, and the fact that certain provisions of the Constitution stood in the way simply proved to be bad for the Constitution.

Logically, this is anarchic. Logically, this repudiation of the supreme law of the land shattered all controls. Logically it should have led to swift deterioration of public order and the progressive reduction of government to impotence. But it did not. That answer is wholly illogical. It is impossible to buttress it by ratiocination. In short, it has nothing to recommend it save the fact that it happens to be true. Why the United States did not go to pieces after Lincoln's summary dealing with its organic law no logician is able to explain. But it did not. Never, since the Civil War, has a practical politician fallen into Calhoun's error of assuming that the people can be bound against their will, even by the Constitution; yet the republic has illogically survived.

It is of high importance to the purposes of this study to note carefully that each of the three successive lunges of the American people has been in the same direction, the direction of more effective control by the bulk of the people. There have been movements in the other direction, but they have been limited in extent and of brief duration.

The first step under Jefferson was the establishment of the

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right of the people to elect their own President without the effective intervention of any such agency as the Electoral College. That right has since been evaded by various devices, but never challenged directly.

The second step, taken under Jackson, was the establishment of the people's right not merely to elect a President, but to select one without reference to his membership in any class, caste, oligarchy, or faction. This right, too, has been evaded, but not challenged.

The third step, under Lincoln, was the demonstration of the people's power to pursue what they regard as their own welfare regardless of any inhibitions that earlier generations had sought to impose on them, even in the Constitution. Legalists have never recognized this as a right—indeed, they could hardly do so and remain legalists—but that the power exists has not been doubted since 1865.

In 1932 a fourth step was taken. This step did not involve the abrogation of any specific provision of the Constitution—for the Eighteenth Amendment was an exercise of police power, rather than an element of the organic law—but it did repudiate the spirit of repression that informed the original document. Even its enemies concede that the announced purpose of the New Deal is to abolish the theoretical neutrality of the government as between man and man and to convert it into an instrument in the hands of the masses to be used by them to promote their welfare.

The New Dealers may be insincere in the profession, but this is their profession. They may be incompetent to achieve their purpose, but this is their purpose. The people may not

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be able by this means to gain what they desire, but this is their desire.

Nor is there anything in this to indicate that the movement of popular thought has changed direction. Popular election of the President was the first assertion that this government belongs to the people *de facto* as well as *de jure*. Popular selection of the President was a re-emphasis of the same theory. Popular rejection of restrictions that threatened the continued existence of the government emphasized it again. Now we have popular assertion of the government's duty to employ all its energies in promotion of the general welfare. In what way is that inconsistent with the other three assertions, or with the theory that the government is the people's?

Far from being un-American, the theory of the New Deal is the strongest existing proof that the progression of American political thought has not changed its direction. This theory is not only logical, it was from the beginning an inevitable development unless something occurred to change the direction in which American thought has been proceeding ever since the adoption of the Constitution.

It must be admitted, however, that this theory does not completely dispose of the opposition. Indeed, as a matter of practical politics, the essential Americanism of New Deal theory has been admitted. In the campaign of 1940 the principal opponent of the New Deal, the candidate of the Republican party, explicitly pledged himself, in the event of his election, not to reverse either the relief program, the public works program, or the agricultural program pursued for the previous eight years. He supported also the defense



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program, but that is in a different category, having little direct bearing on the development of the democratic process in this country.

It was Mr. Willkie's contention, however, that while the theory of the New Deal might be more or less in line with American thought, its practical application had been attended by such wide divergences from Americanism as to taint the whole business with a strongly alien flavor. It was this contention that made so strong an impression on the American electorate that more than twenty-two million voters, some 45% of the whole number, voted for him. It is the suspicion that this contention is true, rather than what they regard as misdeeds of the New Deal in overt act, that accounts for the larger part of their uneasiness as the country proceeds on the difficult and dangerous adventure that lies ahead of it.

The validity of this view obviously is not to be proved or disproved by mere assertion. It is to be tested fairly only by the method of comparison with previous experience, and specifically on three points. The first is the man. How does the leader on this occasion compare with the leaders on the three previous occasions when the country was experiencing a comparable disturbance? The second is the technique. How do Mr. Roosevelt's methods compare with those of Lincoln, Jackson and Jefferson? The third is the reaction. How does the response of the country to this leader compare with its response to the others?

To inquiry along these lines the following pages are devoted. The writer is admittedly a supporter of Mr. Roosevelt,

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but the effort here is not to make converts to his doctrine, but to reassure loyal and patriotic men who are bewildered by it. The argument is not that Mr. Roosevelt is necessarily right, but that he is profoundly American. Not many Americans in such a crisis as the one existing now are disposed to be sticklers for detail; they can follow loyally, and even enthusiastically, a leader whose domestic policy they regard as completely wrong-headed if they are convinced that he is, even in his errors, American to the bone.

## CHAPTER II

MR. ROOSEVELT has fought three Presidential campaigns against opposition steadily increasing in violence, if not in effectiveness. Naturally, it was to the interest of his opponents to create the impression, if they could, that the Rooseveltian philosophy represented a complete break with American tradition; and, equally naturally, in the heat of a campaign it was their tendency to value arguments by their probable effectiveness, rather than by their precise adherence to fairness and truth. In the circumstances, it was perhaps inevitable that the tremendous effort to show that this political leader has no place in the American succession should include, not merely his ideas, but his whole experience. In any event, his life from the cradle up has been inspected and dissected in the minutest detail in the effort to demonstrate that it has not been the sort of life that could produce a true American.

The whole business was irrelevant, of course. It is not a man's origin, but his achievement, not whence he came but what he has done since attaining manhood, that constitutes the American test of fitness for office. Nevertheless, irrelevant or not, the effort has been not altogether fruitless. While the

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majority has never felt any doubt about Mr. Roosevelt's essential Americanism, there is unquestionably a minority that has a more or less vague opinion that his origin and early training were somehow rather un-American, and therefore could hardly be expected to produce a man able to understand American problems, and especially American attitudes.

It may as well be admitted at the start that if "typical American" is to be construed as "average American," then Franklin D. Roosevelt cannot qualify. But in that case, neither could Lincoln. Lincoln's early years were not spent in an average American home, but in one that was, as regards economic and cultural advantages, much below the average. Nevertheless, the country long ago settled upon Lincoln not, indeed, as typical, but as an archetype of Americanism, one of the standards by which the typical is measured. On the other hand, George Washington's origin was as far above the average, still measuring by the cultural and economic advantages it afforded, as Lincoln's was below it. But is the Father of His Country to be regarded as alien in spirit on that account?

Among the half-dozen strongest Presidents, indeed, only one, Wilson, came from a home that might be generally regarded as fairly close to the average; and the intellectual atmosphere of a Presbyterian minister's home, especially one as eminent as the Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, would probably be rated as above average by most people. Jackson and Lincoln belonged to the proletariat; Washington, Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt to the aristocracy. Only if Theodore Roosevelt is displaced from the first six to make room for

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Cleveland does the great middle class secure another representative. John Adams was a strong man and a man of middle-class origin; but that many Americans regard him as among the six strongest Presidents is, to say the least, doubtful.

To say of an American President, therefore, that he began life under highly advantageous circumstances proves nothing about him. It classifies him with John Tyler and William H. Taft, without doubt, but it also classifies him with Washington and Jefferson; so what can one reasonably infer from that? The log cabin-to-White House tradition is romantic, and delights the hearts of all sentimental Americans, but its value diminishes under realistic examination. It gave us Jackson and Lincoln, but it also gave us Fillmore and Garfield. Whether he be by origin proletarian or aristocrat, a President may be equally in line with American tradition—indeed, with either tradition, the great or the small.

As it happens, though, the early environment of Franklin D. Roosevelt, while undeniably aristocratic, was aristocratic in a peculiarly American way. He was born January 30, 1882, at Hyde Park, New York, on the Hudson River a few miles above Poughkeepsie. But he was not born on a baronial estate that had been in the family for generations; his father, James Roosevelt, bought the place only about fifteen years before the boy's birth. The residence was simply the old colonial farmhouse, with a stone wing added. That is what it is, indeed, to this day, although it has been covered with stucco and another wing has been added on the other side;

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but even now it exasperates the President to hear it described as an estate. It is a farm, he says, and nothing but a farm.

That may be granted, and it may also be granted that James Roosevelt was a farmer; apparently he made the place carry itself, at least, which is convincing evidence that he was not only a farmer, but a good one. It would be nothing short of idiotic, however, to contend that he was nothing but a farmer. He was a capitalist, with an office in New York, a seat on the board of directors of the Delaware & Hudson railroad, and investments, sometimes including directorships, in half a score of other corporations. The farm was his favorite place of residence, and he spent as much time there as he could, but it did not represent his living.

He was a rich man—not enormously rich, it is true, but well provided with this world's goods. James Roosevelt's fortune was trifling by comparison with those of the Astors, the Vanderbilts, the DuPonts, the Rockefellers, the Goulds, the Belmonts, or twenty other rich families of the time; and it was all but imperceptible by comparison with the later accumulations of a Henry Ford, a James B. Duke, or even as relatively minor a millionaire as Frank Munsey. James Roosevelt was not a millionaire; perhaps he was not even half a millionaire; yet from one point of view he might be justly regarded as colossally rich, because he had all the money he wanted. He must have been a reasonably good business man, because he kept the money he inherited, and even increased it somewhat; which, in view of the fact that he was running a five-hundred-acre farm, is conclusive evidence that he was no fool. But he did not obtain any great

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pleasure from accumulating money, and flatly refused to slave his life away piling it up.

Cynics may assert that this disregard for mere possession is a highly un-American trait; but that follows only if one admits that the exhibition of common sense is un-American. As a matter of fact, content with one's present possessions is characteristic of people whose economic position is secure and has always been secure. This is true of the Roosevelts, who made their money very early in the nation's history—a good deal of it, indeed, before the nation was established—and who have managed to hang on to it through many generations.

The Roosevelts are an extremely old family, as old families are counted in America. The first one settled in New York while it was still the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam; but he was not a patroon. On the contrary, he seems to have begun as a storekeeper, in a very modest way. Perhaps the most completely American touch in the early record is the fact that this man took a new name, one that had at least a suggestion of aristocracy. The immigrant who landed in New Amsterdam in 1644 was not a Roosevelt. His name was Claes Martenzen. Why he added a place-name to his patronymic is unknown. Perhaps there were so many Martenzens in the colony that some further identification was necessary to avoid confusion. Perhaps, like many of his fellow-citizens in the New World, he was not unwilling to give himself, as he began to get ahead of the crowd, a somewhat more sonorous designation. At any rate, he died not

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plain Claes Martenzen, but "Martenzen van Rosevelt," that is "of Rosevelt," presumably his place of origin. However, he did not ennoble himself without benefit of monarch or herald. The Dutch "van" is by no means the equivalent of the German "von," or the French "de," both of which are restricted to the nobility. At the same time, it should be remembered that Ludwig van Beethoven found that the article added appreciably to his prestige; perhaps Martenzen van Rosevelt had the same experience.

In any event, by the time New Amsterdam had become New York and Isaac, grandson of Claes, decided to leave the city and move up into Dutchess county, the change was thoroughly established, and the first farmer of the clan was known simply as Isaac Roosevelt. Nor was it in name only that this man differed from his father and his grandfather; not only was he no longer a Martenzen, but neither was he purely Dutch. His mother was a German. He himself married a Swede. His son and his grandson both married Englishwomen; his great-grandson, James Roosevelt, was therefore Dutch in little more than name, and his second wife, Sara Delano, was of an ancestry as mixed as his own. Phillipe de Lannoy, who came to America in 1621, had passed on to his remote descendant little that was French except the name.

Her son, therefore, is a product of the melting-pot, with Dutch, Swedish, German, English, French and Italian blood. Woodrow Wilson once scandalized and enraged the North Carolinians by pointing out to them that theirs is not the most, but the least American of the States in that its popula-



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tion, at that time, was only four-tenths of one per cent foreign born. The typically American commonwealth, he said, is a mixture of all the breeds of Europe. By analogy it may be argued that the typical American is not one who can trace his ancestry on both sides straight back to Britain, or to any other European country, but one in whose veins is mingled the blood of many European nations. In this respect, at least, Roosevelt is typically American.

At the same time, the family is genuinely aristocratic in that through many generations a dominant trait has persisted, and that one a trait with a high survival value. The difference between the Edwardses and the Jukes was not in the persistence of a dominant trait, for both had it; but the dominant trait of the Jukes handicapped, rather than helped them in the struggle for an advantageous place in society, so they were not aristocrats, but the reverse.

The conspicuous trait of the Roosevelts through three hundred years has been moderation. Of course, this will be challenged instantly on the ground that it is fantastic to describe Theodore Roosevelt as a moderate man. The objection is sound, as far as the realm of ideas is concerned, but biologically it applies even to the first Roosevelt to become President. He was fanatical on subject of bodily exercise, and it may be that that is why he died at sixty-one; but for the rest, his private life was as decorous as the most exacting Puritan could wish. The vices that kill are gluttony, worry, drunkenness and venery, probably in about that order; and of these Theodore Roosevelt was free. If his physical strenuousness was

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excessive, at least it had the effect of breaking the continuity of his application to mental labor.

But for the rest, the long record of the family is strikingly clear of excesses of any kind. The then current Isaac Roosevelt served in the New York State Constitutional Convention of 1776; but thereafter for more than a hundred years it does not appear that any Roosevelt held public office except for local magistracies, township and county commissions, and other small, unsalaried positions that no prominent citizen can well avoid. The Roosevelts had been prosperous merchants in New York for more than a century before John Jacob Astor arrived there, and for a century and a half before Commodore Vanderbilt was born. Being on the ground, they must have had presented to them the opportunities that Astor and Vanderbilt seized; being reasonably good business men, they must have recognized those opportunities—indeed, they exploited them to some extent. But lacking the terrific acquisitive drive that characterized the great millionaires, they were content with a reasonable competence.

In the whole Roosevelt record there is not a single great musician, painter, sculptor, or other artist, and not a single madman. No Roosevelt ever died as a martyr to some great cause, and none was ever shot in a quarrel over a trollop. Up to the eighth generation there is no conspicuous instance in which a Roosevelt ever refused to do his duty, and none in which one ever did much more than his duty. For two hundred and fifty years the family was remarkably clear of both scandal and glory. Up to the last half-century they were simply worthy people, intelligent without genius, decent

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without saintliness, educated without erudition, not slothful in business, but not titans of industry—in short, admirable, but not inspiring.

The mind of the ordinary man flatly rejects the idea of change without cause. Logicians and philosophers may split hairs over the subject, but most of us believe that when a series of events has proceeded for a long time in one direction, and then suddenly changes direction, there must be a definite reason for the change. When a family for seven generations has consistently produced men of the same general type, and then suddenly begins to produce others of a widely different type, the generality of mankind will either find an explanation, or invent one. For two hundred and fifty years the descendants of Claes Martenzen van Rosevelt were recognizably of the same general type—an admirable type, but remarkable only in its consistency through so long a period. Then, suddenly, in this line appeared not one, but two, of the most extraordinary men this country has ever produced.

Inevitably, in the circumstances, people will begin to seek in the experience of the two unusual Roosevelts an element common to both, but not common to all the tribe. Such an element is not far to seek. It is physical disability, occasioned by asthma in one case and by poliomyelitis in the other. That the careers of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt were profoundly affected by these afflictions there can be no doubt. It is undeniable that the stock was good stock, to begin with. There was iron in the Roosevelt blood, otherwise the psychic and physical heats and hammerings to which these two were

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subjected would have destroyed them. But the other Roosevelts were never subjected to such forging; it is certainly not unreasonable to infer that that may be one reason why none of the other Roosevelts was as strong.

It may be objected that the second Roosevelt had already made a remarkable career before he suffered infantile paralysis. It is true. He had risen high enough to be a candidate for Vice President before his misfortune—but not before asthma had afflicted his cousin. There is no doubt whatever that the spectacular career of Theodore Roosevelt was largely responsible for turning Franklin's mind toward public service as a suitable life-work for a man in his position. Since his ancestor, Isaac, had served in the Constitutional Convention in 1776, the only kinsman of his who had done anything of the sort was his half-brother, James Roosevelt Roosevelt, who had held several minor diplomatic appointments under President Cleveland. But "Rosy" Roosevelt himself seems never to have taken his diplomatic career with any great seriousness, and certainly the rest of the family did not. He was an amiable gentleman, popular with his associates, and married to a daughter of Mrs. William Astor, *the* Mrs. Astor who ruled New York society in the Mauve Decade; he had plenty of ability to discharge the duties of a First Secretary of Legation admirably, but there was no searing ambition in him, nor was his position one likely to dazzle and enthrall a young half-brother, who had seen many foreign countries with his own eyes.

But Theodore the Furious was a different proposition. In

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the first place, he was an exception to all Rooseveltian rules. The intensity that he had developed in his battle to overcome the disability that handicapped him in boyhood, and that remained after the asthma had disappeared, was something unheard-of in Roosevelts. But as that intensity carried him higher and higher, its value became more and more apparent to young Franklin. There is evidence that the younger man regarded the older one with an admiration not unmingled with chagrin, for Theodore was an exceptional Roosevelt in another respect—not only was he intense, but he was also Republican. Until the time of Theodore's father all the Roosevelts had apparently regarded themselves as Dutchmen, Episcopalians and Democrats by inheritance. It was at the time of the Civil War crisis that the first Theodore flouted the tradition by turning Republican; and now it was this branch, which Franklin regarded as politically recreant, that was making more noise in the world than the Roosevelts had ever made before. It was most regrettable, and obviously something ought to be done about it; so Franklin did something. He went into politics on the Democratic side.

That this is an over-simplification goes without saying. But any attempt to penetrate the mysteries of personality is bound to involve some over-simplification. A thousand influences other than his early disability contributed to the making of Theodore Roosevelt. A thousand influences other than that of his cousin contributed to Franklin Roosevelt's decision. But that a sickly boyhood was important in the shaping of Theodore is beyond doubt; and that Theodore

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was important in the shaping of Franklin is equally beyond doubt.

It was some time after the appearance of Theodore upon the stage of national affairs that Franklin grew old enough to exhibit signs of departure from the Roosevelt tradition. His boyhood had been almost idyllic. Demagogic political orators sedulously avoid the President's early life, because there is nothing in it for them; nothing could be worse adapted for tear-squeezing tactics, for it is impossible to discover a single piteous episode.

James Roosevelt was over fifty at the time of his marriage to Sara Delano, which meant that he was aging as the boy grew up; but he seems nevertheless to have maintained an unusual understanding of a boy's way of thinking and of a boy's problems. The relation between father and son was characterized by a happy serenity that makes it forever impossible to portray Roosevelt as a young Ivanhoe, driven by a stern parent to battle his way through the world as the Disinherited Knight. It was his father who instructed the boy in the ways of country life. It was with his father that he made the rounds of the farm, it was from his father that he learned the lore of weather and seasons and growing things. It was from his father that he learned to ride and to shoot, and his father supplied him with the sailboat that was the great joy of his life. The natural, the inevitable, result was that he idolized his father, and reveres his memory to this day. There was no inner conflict there.

His mother was a powerful personality, but one so well

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balanced with common sense that her strong influence over her son never drifted into domineering. His name he owes to her. Traditionally, since his half-brother was named James, his name should have been Isaac. But an adored uncle of Mrs. Roosevelt had recently died childless, and she conferred on her son part of that uncle's name. He was Franklin Hughes Delano, reputed to be one of the handsomest men of his time, and apparently as charming as he was handsome. He had married Laura, daughter of William B. Astor. It is difficult, at this date, to discover any especially forceful attributes in this gentleman, but his niece could not endure the thought that the name of Franklin Delano should be forgotten, and so undertook to preserve it in the memories of men. She succeeded.

The young Roosevelt did not suffer even the enviable misfortune of being spoiled. His parents were able and willing to give him everything that was good for a boy, but they were people of common sense, therefore just as careful not to give him anything that was bad for him. Money, for example, he was not permitted to have in any quantity. A pony, yes; a bicycle, certainly; bats and balls, bow and arrows, a gun when he grew old enough to handle it without being a menace to the whole neighborhood—anything that might contribute to a healthy boy's fun they were willing to provide, so he really had no need of money, and it was not given to him. He did not even have an allowance. Years later his mother was inclined to be a little apologetic about this; it was not the custom at that time to provide young boys with allowances, she said. But what she meant was that it was

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not the custom among sensible people. As a matter of record, New York right then was full of young rakehells cutting a urid swath across the town and ruining themselves with too much money furnished by silly parents. It is highly probable that such spectacles influenced James Roosevelt and his wife much more strongly than mere custom; although it is true enough that their generation had a much clearer appreciation of the explosive power of cash in the hands of adolescents than we seem to have today—a clearer appreciation, and, one is tempted to add, a healthier one.

The longer one studies the record, the more one is impressed by the complete absence in it of a single important influence likely to produce a psychological imbalance. Young Roosevelt's world was a pleasant world, but he was never permitted to gain the impression that he was its monarch. His reasonable requests were granted readily; but there was authority above him, and the moment his requests became unreasonable, authority shut down; it was done pleasantly and kindly, but it was done, and he soon learned that when his father said, "No," that ended the matter. But he learned at the same time that his father never said "No" without a reason, usually an excellent one; so the result was respect, not smouldering resentment that would burst out in revolt.

Unfriendly biographers have adopted the curious notion that Roosevelt's early environment was far too easy to produce a strong character. The boy's first schooling was given him by a series of tutors, not by the public schools; and this has been held up as an extreme example of coddling. As a matter of fact, the public schools in the closing years of the



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nineteenth century were far from being as efficient as they are today; and in addition, the Roosevelts were great travelers. With a tutor, the boy could accompany them without interrupting his education.

The argument of the biographers is, of course, absurd on its face. It may be refuted merely by granting it. Say that the President's early training was of a sort that could have produced only a softie. Very well; he is its product, and if he is a cream-puff, what are Herbert Hoover, Alfred M. Landon and Wendell L. Willkie? These three gentlemen successively have come into collision with Roosevelt, and in every case it was not the Roosevelt remains that were spattered over the scene after the crash. If the President is soft, then the country has been greatly deceived about the actual constitution of gentry whom it has been accustomed to regard as among the solidest practical politicians now alive. If the President is soft, then the opposition must be composed entirely of mist and moonshine, wraiths indeed.

As a matter of fact, even in theory it is nonsensical to suppose that a boy whose physical needs are supplied with bounty and wisdom, and whose mental traits are developed sensibly, firmly, yet kindly, is going to turn out soft. The result of such training is not softness, but balance, poise, the quality that enables a man to keep his head under unexpected shocks and strains. That is what this man got out of it.

As he looks back upon his own life today, though, the President regards as one of the greatest benefits his parents conferred upon him the gift of their friends. The Roosevelts apparently never looked upon themselves as especially in-

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tellectual, and they were anything but bohemians; but they did number among their acquaintances, both in this country and abroad, a great many people who were not only cultivated, but able. From his earliest days the boy was accustomed to the battle of ideas, for his home was frequented by people with opinions on every current subject of debate. Practically every year, too, the family went abroad. For two summers young Franklin was put in school in Germany, and during two others he and his tutor made bicycle tours in Europe. These experiences resulted in an excellent command of the German and French languages and, while his father's position was not an official one, it is possible that the boy acquired a knowledge of the ways of Europeans equal to that picked up by John Quincy Adams during his early years.

In one respect, however, this sort of life was disabling. It did set him apart from other boys of his age. But when the boy was fourteen, his parents decided that strictly private education had exhausted its usefulness in his case, and that he should enter a regular school. They chose Groton, of course. Four elements made the choice practically inevitable—first, the time was the middle of the nineties; second, the Roosevelts lived in New York; third, they had money; and, fourth, they were not eccentrics, but conventional people, inclined to do what everyone else in their set was doing, provided it was not completely foolish. In the nineties New Yorkers who had money enough usually sent their sons to Groton. Possibly it was not the ideal choice. Certainly it was expensive, certainly it was exclusive, and evidence is not lack-

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ing that it was snobbish. Perhaps it was, as one unfriendly biographer sneers, "more English than Eton and Harrow themselves." As a matter of fact Groton, at the time young Roosevelt went there, was probably a good deal better than its detractors would have us believe; but if one assumes the truth of the worst that has been said about it, its faults were of a kind not likely to have much effect on this youth. A boy who had lived in a genuinely cosmopolitan atmosphere all his life was more likely to find any school, even Groton, not so much alien as narrow. More than that, and perhaps even more important than that, this boy entered late. He was well prepared and took his place in one of the higher forms, which means that he was rather unlikely to become narrowly bound by so-called "school spirit," at least in its more extreme forms.

Roosevelt was not a particularly brilliant student, either at Groton or later when he went on to Harvard. This is open to several constructions and it has been, in fact, construed in several ways, some of them hostile. Theoretically, a boy who stands in the middle of the class may be of a mental capacity distinctly below that of the upper half, or he may be admirably endowed, intellectually, but cursed with laziness. Non-admirers of the President have adopted both views, without paying much attention to the implications of these theories. If Roosevelt was duller, or lazier, than about fifty per cent of his classes at Groton and Harvard, consider what that implies as to the upper half of these classes. This average member in later years proved to be able to get through enough work every day to kill five ordinary men, and to keep up the

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pace year after year and decade after decade. This average member in later years proved intelligent enough to get himself elected President of the United States three times. Then if he was duller, or lazier, than half his classmates, certainly his superiors must have been such intellectual giants and such marvels of industry as the world has never seen grouped in any one place before. The suggestion is absurd on its face.

The truth probably is that young Roosevelt made only an indifferent record in school because he had not time to make a brilliant one. He had much to do in school besides studying books. He had to make up, in the supremely important study of other boys, the time he had lost in his earliest years, when he was under the instruction of governesses and tutors. The classroom represented only half, and perhaps less than half, of the education he was receiving in school and college; the other half was represented by the campus, and the diligence with which he applied himself to that branch is sufficiently attested by the way he knew how to handle men after he emerged from school.

Perhaps, too, family influence may have counted in this period. After all, he was a Roosevelt, one of a race constitutionally distrustful of over-doing anything. Any Roosevelt would have regarded it as disgraceful to flunk; but most Roosevelts would have regarded it not, perhaps, as downright disgraceful, but certainly as in doubtful taste to lead the class. It is hardly reasonable to expect the President to admit ever having held any such unorthodox view of education; but this explanation at least has the merit of not being refuted by obvious facts.

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The Groton-Harvard years were, in fact, not the boy's choice. His ambition had been to attend Annapolis and become a naval officer. His enthusiasm for the sea was deep, and it had been strengthened by travel and above all by summers spent at the family cottage on Campobello island in Passamaquoddy bay, where the Maine-Canada boundary touches the sea.

These summers at Campobello were perhaps a vastly more important part of the education of Franklin D. Roosevelt than is generally realized. Even before he went to Groton his father had given him a sailboat of his own, a twenty-one footer, large enough to cross respectable expanses of open water, yet small enough for a small boy to handle. It was a Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club Knockabout, one of the first of the one-design classes, carrying jib, mainsail and spinnaker. It had a tiny cabin, with two bunks, an oil stove and lockers. It was a keel boat with a small centerboard lowered through the keel. Today such a boat would cost close to \$3,000, but the elder Roosevelt paid \$600 for the one he gave to his son. In it the boy learned to know those waters so intimately, in all lights and all weathers that many years later, when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he took a United States destroyer briskly and neatly through a narrow reach where her own officers did not believe she could go.

Learning to sail in Passamaquoddy bay implies a great deal. There is no finer water in the world for sailing, provided the sailor maintains a decent respect for the fundamental laws of seamanship; and not much water that is worse for the

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man who doesn't. To begin with, it is savagely cold, which means that even the amateur sailor stays in his boat, and capsizing is not at all the humorous mischance that small boys consider it in lower latitudes. In the second place, grounding is not a matter of running gently upon a smoothly shelving bed of sand. Reefs and shores, more often than not, consist of a wild confusion of fanged boulders where merely touching may easily rip the bottom out of the stoutest craft. But sudden thunder-squalls are almost unknown, and the only real treachery is fog. The prodigious tides make currents and tide-rips dangerous, but they are not treacherous; they may be relied on to act at a certain time in a certain fashion, and a man who knows his way about has no occasion to be caught among them. In few places in the world, however, is there more beautiful water. Dead calms are rare and of short duration, yet in summer a blow that makes it dangerous to go out, or even uncomfortable for a reasonably good sailor, is almost as uncommon.

Nevertheless, Passamaquoddy is never a tame and toothless sea. The boy who learns to handle a boat there acquires a profound and salutary respect for the power of the elements. This particular boy was well bred, anyhow, but if he had been the worst spoiled brat that ever lived he must have learned, before he had long sailed a small boat about Campobello, that this world is subject unto law. Kicking and screaming may browbeat a doting family, but they have no effect on a tide-rip. In handling a small boat, certain things must be done at certain times, and revolt against the rules brings its own punishment, instantly and inexorably. Yet the sailor

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of a small boat discovers that if law is relentless, justice is never denied. Forces infinitely greater than he is compel him to perform certain acts in a certain order, and there is no escape from this compulsion; yet if he understands the ways in which these forces move and governs himself accordingly, that same inexorable law becomes his protection. The sea is not capricious. It seems so only to those who have never learned, or have misunderstood, or have forgotten its laws.

For a boy who is destined to become a statesman, especially in a democratic country, learning to sail a small boat in the waters north of Portland Head is admirable training. There he will learn, early in life, that he cannot alter all the rules, that his will counts, but can never be supreme, and, most important of all, that the very forces that destroy the fool are the forces that sweep the wise man on to victory. There he may learn at the same time self-respect and the stern fact that there are limitations upon all human endeavor. There he will learn that while Nature rewards wisdom and skill with unerring justice, she has no regard whatever for good intentions.

But while he undoubtedly absorbed this lore, the immediately apparent effect that this experience had upon the young Roosevelt was the development in him of a wild desire to go to sea. Out of this developed his first and, indeed, his only serious conflict with his father. James Roosevelt was against it, and although he was too wise to issue any arbitrary decrees, eventually he argued the boy out of it. Yet the victory was not complete, for a year or so later, when the Spanish war began, Franklin for once actually revolted against the

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parental authority. He and another boy resolved to run away to sea, and to effect their purpose they seem to have corrupted a pieman, who peddled his wares at Groton once a week. This man agreed, after his next visit to the school, that he would transport the boys in his wagon to Boston, where they could enlist in the navy. But, alas for youthful dreams of glory! On the very day before the pieman was to make his next visit, both boys developed sore throats; the school physician took one look and instantly incarcerated them in the infirmary, where they blossomed out with fine cases of measles. So short was this war that by the time they were fully recovered, it was practically over, and the embryo Farraguts had instead of undying fame nothing except nauseous medicines and, perhaps, the jeers of unfeeling contemporaries at school. To a man in his fifties such an experience presents its absurd aspects, and the President laughs over it today; but at sixteen it must have been shattering. At any rate, young Roosevelt subsided, finished his course at Groton, and went dutifully on to Harvard.

What animated James Roosevelt in his opposition to a naval career for his son is not clear. There is no evidence that he had any objection to the navy itself. Probably his attitude was based on family sentiment, a strong conviction that a Roosevelt's first duty was to continue the line and maintain its position. True, he had an elder son, "Rosy" Roosevelt; but he was Franklin's half-brother, not a child of Sara Delano. She was a woman of independent fortune, which would descend to Franklin, not to his half-brother, and this made



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the younger boy's position somewhat different from that of younger sons in general.

At any rate, James Roosevelt prevailed. Perhaps he was wise. Undoubtedly that is the view that most people take. His advice directed his son into a career incomparably more illustrious than any he would have been likely to make as a naval officer. From the standpoint of the navy, this decision of the elder Roosevelt was a marvelous stroke of fortune, for no admiral can hope to do a tithe as much for the navy as has been accomplished by the first sailor President. But if the father's first object was to assure his son's happiness, the wisdom of his course is open to question. Franklin Roosevelt would have made a good naval officer, and he would have had a glorious time in the service. By this time he would almost certainly have been a flag officer, after a reasonably care free and profoundly happy life. As it is, he is commander-in-chief of the entire navy; but it is probable that he would vastly prefer to be commander of the battle fleet, taking orders from some President who had never felt the lure of the sea.

It is not justifiable to attribute Franklin Roosevelt's love of salt water entirely to the boat that his father gave him; but there is little doubt that that boat stimulated it enormously, and no doubt whatever that it gave him the foundation of practical knowledge of seamanship on which he proceeded to build an enormous superstructure of theory and history. It was the small boat that drove the small boy to devour all sorts of books, some of them heavy and dull, about ships and seamen. It was the small boat that set him to studying

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the history of the American navy. Together these had a marked effect on his manner of thinking. More than any other man who has come to the White House, this one has had the sea in the back of his mind. The proof is to be found in his serious enterprises, as much as in his recreations. When he came to the bar he specialized in admiralty law. When as a rising young politician allied with a successful party he had his choice among minor posts in a national administration, he rejected two others, either of which might have led to highly desirable financial connections, and chose instead a post in the Navy Department.

It may be argued with some plausibility that this characteristic had no perceptible effect upon the course of events in the first two Roosevelt administrations, but it is plausible, rather than accurate. From the very beginning, that is to say, from March 4, 1933, every project that held out a reasonable prospect of strengthening the United States Navy has had strong and consistent support from the White House. There were countless other problems that seemed to be more important and certainly were more spectacular, and they absorbed public attention to such an extent that few Americans realized what was happening to the navy. Perhaps the most effective way of telling the story is simply by citation of the figures showing what has been spent on that branch of the service in recent years. Here they are, odd numbers being stricken out: 1934, \$303,000,000; 1935, \$440,000,000; 1936, \$518,000,000; 1937, \$539,000,000; 1938, \$587,000,000; 1939, \$660,000,000; 1940, \$885,000,000. For the sake of argument, let us disregard the last two figures. By 1939 any fool could

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have seen that strengthening the navy was highly important; the significant thing is that by 1938 the expenditures on naval armament had been brought up from \$303,000,000 to \$587,000,000.

Nor was all this money devoted to building. In the five years prior to 1938 the rejoicing admirals had burnt up more money in powder and projectiles than any United States admirals had ever had before in time of peace. The result was that when the great crisis of 1939 arose, the United States had not only a considerable number of new ships, but on the old ships it had gun crews who could actually hit what they aimed at, and who knew they could because they had done it in unprecedentedly extensive target practice. In the first year of the European war, there was anxiety and uncertainty in every other phase of American life; but in the navy, from ensign to admiral, one found extraordinary confidence. Everyone agreed that the navy was not big enough to hold two oceans; but it was difficult, if it was, indeed, possible to find an officer who doubted that, ship for ship, and gun for gun, the American navy could handle anything afloat.

But the presence of a sea-going President in the White House meant a great deal more, through these years, than merely added fighting strength in the navy. The sea is the highway to the rest of the world, and the man who is familiar with the highway is of necessity familiar with the traffic that uses it. Any intelligent man who occupies the office of President of the United States will make every effort to keep informed of what is going on in other nations; but familiarity with the sea greatly facilitates a man's compre-

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hension of the effect that a new policy adopted by some foreign nation will have upon the sea-borne commerce and the naval defense of the United States. It was his study of naval history that enabled the President to understand, long before it had been realized by other Americans of equal intelligence, the significance of the European war to this country. Many other Americans understood quite as well as he the alignment as between opposing philosophies of government; but it took a sea-faring man to comprehend the threat to our communications and therefore to our entire economic organization. His study of naval history enabled him to do that; his love of the sea had enabled him to wade through countless dull volumes of naval history; and the little boat had much to do with his love of the sea. Thus it is possible to imagine that the little knockabout that James Roosevelt bought for his small son has had a more powerful effect upon American history than many a huge battleship that became obsolete without ever firing a shot at an enemy.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt entered Harvard, in the fall of 1900, the word *bolshevik* was as yet confined to the Russian language; a score of years later he would unquestionably have been described as a member of the bolshevik element. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, he was obviously an inhabitant of the Gold Coast—the Harvard term for the snootiest section of the student body—by wealth, by social position and by family tradition. As a Roosevelt he would have found some, at least, of the more exclusive clubs open to him. As not only a Roosevelt but also a good fellow in his own right, he found all of them open. In fact he joined

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eight, all told, including the Hasty Pudding, before his graduation. At the same time he was a frank, not to say blatant, Democrat at a time when it was decidedly anomalous for a Gold Coaster to be a Democrat. Worse than that, he was whooping for Bryan, although a cousin who bore his own name was running for Vice-President on the Republican ticket. Worse than *that*, in his sophomore year he joined enthusiastically in war relief work for the Boers, although gentlemen of Harvard were supposed to be supporters of the English. Worst of all, in his very first year he organized a rising of the *Jacquerie* who didn't belong to any club, but who greatly out-numbered the Gold Coasters, and helped them elect a proletarian slate to the class offices.

It is undeniably true that a certain proportion of college boys tend to become extreme radicals, as we are vociferously reminded at practically every meeting of every alumni association. What is frequently overlooked is the equally undeniable fact that of all the conservatives that walk the earth, none is more hide-bound than the conservative collegian. The conservatives in his class at Harvard were intensely annoyed by Roosevelt's activities, although in perspective they seem harmless enough. Perhaps the conservatives might have borne the strain more philosophically if this man had been peculiar in all his aspects. But he was not. In most ways, he was incontestably normal. He wasn't a grind; he got off his academic work in three years, instead of the usual four, it is true, but he took none of the prizes and didn't even make Phi Beta Kappa; that fraternity received him only after he had become eminent in the outside world. He wasn't even

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an athletic hero; he went in for various sports, but he didn't shine. He played on the freshman football team, but not the varsity. He got on the varsity rowing squad, but never made the eight. He played a good game of tennis, but apparently never came near being champion. In short, he was vigorous enough to leave no doubt that he was one hundred per cent masculine, but he was no marvel. In the realm of ideas he was enough of a leader to become editor of the *Crimson*, the undergraduate daily, but the only resounding attack he ever made upon the university authorities was based upon their negligence in the matter of providing adequate fire-escapes on the dormitories. He seemed quite content to permit Charles W. Eliot to run the university, and never shuddered once over what was happening to the minds of the students.

It was therefore impossible for the Gold Coast to dismiss him as a crank and be no longer troubled by his outbreaks. He was too obviously anything but a crank. He was at least ninety-five per cent a perfectly normal Gold Coaster; yet he would ally himself with such odd creatures as Democrats, Boers and non-club members. It was most disturbing.

It is idle to try to discover in Roosevelt at Harvard either an intellectual giant or a moral hero; yet without doubt certain tendencies that later became conspicuous were manifesting themselves in his character then. His sympathy with the Boers, for example, was a more or less dim adumbration of his subsequent clear realization of the fact that men who fight for their own liberty anywhere are fighting for all liberty, everywhere. His leadership of the proletarian revolt against the club-men's slate for the class offices may have

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been the expression of a deep yearning over the poor in spirit, but it is just as easily explained as an example of the born leader's alert perception of where the power lies and of the way to organize it. His crusade for better fire-escapes might be construed as budding humanitarianism, but surely it is more judicious to accept it for what it claimed to be, the expression of a natural objection to being roasted alive. One may even be a little skeptical of his allegiance to the Democratic party as a fact of large significance. After all, it is not common for boys of eighteen to be already in possession of a sharply defined political philosophy based on their own reasoning. If young Roosevelt had been a Republican, the case would be stronger; but he came of a family Democratic for generations. Remember, of all the Roosevelts, none had deserted that party until the time of the first Theodore, father of the famous Theodore. Franklin Roosevelt doubtless received his Democracy, like his name, from his father. The fact that in later years he made both the party and the name mean something they had never meant before does not necessarily prove that he was a political philosopher before he could vote.

But one characteristic of the man unquestionably showed up brilliantly in the college boy. This was social and moral courage. In college the pressure toward conformity is great. Negative evidence of its power is furnished by the extremes to which those who rebel are driven. It is greatest, however, not upon fanatics, and not upon those whom financial straits, or a barren cultural background, or other disabilities set apart from the main body; in these some eccentricity is not

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unexpected and is therefore easily tolerable. The pressure toward conformity is greatest upon the conventional, the inheritors of the college tradition, the sons of alumni, whose status is fixed for them before they ever set foot upon the campus. The force of public opinion tending to drive these into the accepted paths is incalculable; and it is a rare boy who has already developed, at the age of a college freshman, inner resources capable of resisting it.

This boy had. The imperturbability with which the President of the United States has disregarded the recriminations of disappointed and disapproving party associates is probably a much less remarkable display of courage than was shown by Freshman Roosevelt resolutely proceeding to smash the Gold Coast slate despite the howls of his infuriated classmates.

Be that as it may, he emerged from Harvard, in the class of 1904, with the reputation of an amiable, moderately able, but deplorably unpredictable fellow. Everybody liked him, but a faint aura of Jacobinism hung around him. It is interesting today to compare their classmates' feeling with regard to the two great rivals for the admiration of all free peoples, Roosevelt and Churchill. The American never was conceded the brilliance that everyone granted the Englishman but, by way of compensation, Roosevelt was the more popular among his schoolmates. Both were regarded as honest men with high ideals, but at Oxford, as at Harvard, sober graduates shook their heads sadly and returned the damning verdict, "A nice fellow, yes, but unsound!"

In the case of Churchill, the whole world knows, now, that



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he gained this reputation by looking steadfastly at what others preferred not to see and by drawing the conclusions that others dared not draw. In short, he was deemed unsound because in reality he was sounder, by far, than anyone else.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, once graduated from Harvard, went on to the law school of Columbia University and became a lawyer, for no very compelling reason.

His critics, or some of them, have professed to find this discreditable. They have been at pains to prove that he had neither the aptitude nor the temperament of a great juriconsult, and having established it to their satisfaction seem to think that they have made a case against the man. But why?

Their argument, up to a certain point, is probably sound enough. It is nonsensical, of course, to assert, or to insinuate, that Mr. Roosevelt was no lawyer at all; the plain facts explode that theory. Not only did he pass his examinations and secure admission to the bar, but for years he practiced in New York successfully enough to add appreciably to his income. The idea that a man of no capacity whatever could build up a respectable practice in New York City is simply idiotic.

But it is perfectly true that Roosevelt was neither such a legal scholar as, say, Dean Pound, nor such a trial lawyer as Clarence Darrow, nor such a consultant as John W. Davis. In short, he was not a great lawyer. It is conceivable that, if he had set his mind to it, he might have reached the first rank, either as scholar, as advocate, or as adviser; but that is

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just the point—he couldn't set his mind to it. If he had had a really vital interest in the law—and only men with a vital interest in it reach the summit—he would never have abandoned the profession for politics, or for anything else. It is hard to see why any enemy should emphasize, or any friend should attempt to deny the obvious fact that this man was never intended to be a lawyer. Oh, he did well enough, as a junior associate of the firm of Carter, Ledyard & Milburn, handling municipal court cases. Eventually, according to Ernest K. Lindley, a friendly biographer, he specialized in admiralty law, and became the firm's specialist in that branch. This was a respectable record for a newly-fledged attorney, but it was nothing to set the river on fire.

Why, then, did he go into it? There were several reasons, none of them very strong but, in combination, stronger than the pull in any other direction. One, no doubt, was the advice of his father, which perhaps was more, rather than less, influential now, because James Roosevelt had died while his son was at Harvard. Another was the fact that legal training would be of high value in the management of his estate, and that of his mother. Another, and probably the strongest, was the fact that his own income was not so large that he had no need to supplement it by his own efforts. Possibly another was the fact that in the United States the law is more or less the ante-room to public service. Yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that perhaps the decisive influence was the simple fact that at this time there was nothing else that he very strongly wished to do.

If all this suggests that in the early years of the century

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Franklin D. Roosevelt, B.A., Harvard, '04, was not a very remarkable young man, the only reply is that in these years nobody remarked him. It is probable that at the time there were at least a thousand recent graduates in New York City for whom their associates would have predicted a career as brilliant as they believed this one would achieve.

Nevertheless, it was precisely at this period that Roosevelt accomplished one of the most remarkable feats of his career. Although he had barely passed voting age, he chose a wife with a shrewd competence rarely exhibited by men twice his age. Mrs. Roosevelt, in her autobiography, presents a picture of herself which, although it is patently sincere, must be accepted with a certain reserve; in her own opinion she was utterly devoid of graces, either of person or of personality. But the experience of a cynical world does not sustain that belief. Girls who are utterly graceless do not captivate well-to-do, good-looking and popular young bachelors. Eleanor Roosevelt—she was a distant cousin of the man she married and bore the same name—may have lacked the obvious prettiness that brings swarms of admirers, but a man who was to prove himself one of the finest judges of people of his generation did not pass her without a second glance.

It would be pointless and silly to ignore the fact that there are people to whom Mrs. Roosevelt's name is anathema. Indeed, in two Presidential campaigns she has been attacked with a recklessness, a bitterness, and a villainy unmatched since the most infamous campaign in American political history, that directed against Mrs. Andrew Jackson in 1828. Yet it is quite impossible to weep over Mrs. Roosevelt, for

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two reasons; the first is that the outrageousness of the attacks, almost incredible as it is, yet remains less astonishing than their futility; the second is that as a controversialist, in spite of a really quiet and apparently artless style, she is deadly. She has been unjustly assailed, many times, which gives her a fair claim to sympathy. But, for that matter, fair-minded people sympathize with Joe Louis when some drunken bum takes a swing at him; but one does not weep for Joe—one weeps for the bum.

The reason for the attacks on Mrs. Roosevelt is, of course, precisely the reason for calling Franklin Roosevelt's choice of her as his mate one of his most remarkable exhibitions of genius. She is hated because she has powerfully and effectively assisted her husband's career. This is all the more exasperating to her husband's enemies because she has done it by highly individual methods which nobody else could apply successfully. In the beginning of the Roosevelt regime gentlemen wise in their own estimation predicted that for the President's wife to play any part of her own in public life would ruin him; when it didn't, they suffered the mortification of seeing their own wisdom proved vain and empty. This is hard to forgive. It is so hard to forgive that it has betrayed some ordinarily temperate people into displays of venom that they have probably repented when the passion of the moment had passed.

All this was far in the future, though, and none of those present could foresee it when, on March 17, 1905, Eleanor Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were married in the twin houses of the bride's cousin, Mrs. Henry Parish, Jr.,

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and Mrs. Parish's mother, Mrs. E. Livingston Ludlow, at numbers 6 and 8 East Seventy-sixth Street, New York. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Endicott Peabody, headmaster of Groton school. Among the bridesmaids were Misses Alice Roosevelt and Corinne Douglas Robinson. The best man was Lathrop Brown. All this was enough to give the affair the cachet of social distinction, but in the eyes of the public it was all as nothing by comparison with the tremendous, the overpowering fact that the bride was given in marriage by her uncle, the President of the United States.

Thirty-two years afterward the bride wrote the story with a humor that was still a little wry. Never was a bridal couple more completely eclipsed. Crowds jammed the streets until the police were driven wild, but the people were not there to see the newlyweds; the very guests at the reception, after hasty congratulations, drifted off, for the most part, to hear, or at least to see, the great man. It was with some difficulty that the members of the bridal party were assembled for the ceremony of cutting the wedding cake.

In none of this was there any taint of malice. Theodore Roosevelt had his faults, but he was incapable of the pettiness of deliberately spoiling a wedding party; however, he was the sort of man whose mere entrance would have paled the lights and drowned the noise in a bowling-alley. One of his sons is said to have remarked of him that "when he goes to a wedding he wants to be the bride, and when he goes to a funeral, he wants to be the corpse." This was certainly facetious exaggeration; but it would have been perfectly true, at least in 1905, to say that when he attended either sort of

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assembly, both the bride and the corpse might as well have been somewhere else for all the attention they got from the by-standers.

No doubt all these matters belong among the minutiae of the times. Nevertheless, it is certainly true that the impressions received at the time of one's marriage are likely to be lasting. It is possibly not without historical significance that Mr. and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt on their wedding day had it driven home with the force of sledge-hammer blows that it is a matter of considerable importance to be President of the United States.

At the time of his marriage Roosevelt still had two years ahead at the Columbia law school, and for the three years after he finished the life that the Roosevelts lived was pretty much that of any other young American couple in similar circumstances. He did reasonably well with his law firm, and the senior partners were pleased with him. There is no doubt that he was on the road to a good position, perhaps an eminent position at the bar, one that would have brought substantial financial returns. But it would be idle to pretend that he was a sensationally brilliant addition to the firm. The truth is, his heart was never in it. Although he passed his examinations with no particular difficulty, he had not even taken an LL.B. degree at Columbia; when his studies were sufficiently advanced to permit him to take the bar examinations and secure a license, he quit—certainly not the course of action of a man whose heart burned with devotion to the law, not merely as a means of livelihood, but as a means of

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self-expression, a way of life, a jealous mistress demanding and deserving all his energies.

Until 1910 Roosevelt worked dutifully at his desk in the law office, handling the cases assigned to him well enough to earn the approval of his seniors, but never startling them, either by flashes of brilliance, or by assiduous and tireless industry. He was frankly glad to get away to Hyde Park on week-ends, where he was finding country life more and more interesting as he grew better acquainted with his neighbors and their doings. He became a member of the volunteer fire company. He was made a director of the First National Bank of Poughkeepsie. He found people more interesting than documents, and the art of handling men more fascinating than the art of preparing briefs. Little by little, for the most part, no doubt, unconsciously, he was edging nearer and nearer to a different way of life. From the moment he entered this way he would have his heart in it, and the amiable, admirable and useful, but patently second-rate Roosevelt would turn into a very different sort of man.

### CHAPTER III

IN THE year 1910 John K. Sague, Mayor of Poughkeepsie, and a Democrat, had an idea which was approved, when he submitted it to them, by other Democratic leaders of the Twenty-Sixth Senatorial District. The idea was, to be brutally frank, that young Roosevelt would make an acceptable burnt offering to be sacrificed on the altar of the Democratic party.

Naturally, John Sague never admitted any such crass motivation. His version was that his eagle eye, more penetrating than that of any other politician, perceived the latent genius in the young man, so when he offered Roosevelt the Democratic nomination to the State Senate from the Twenty-Sixth District, he was consciously opening the way to a great career. In politics, all things are possible, so it is possible, even, that this is true. But it is not probable. The nomination had first been offered to Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, who had been in politics for years, and had once run for Governor. Chanler was admittedly good—so good, indeed, that he had snatched a seat in the lower house of the Legislature from rock-ribbed Republican Dutchess County. But the Senatorial candidate would have to carry, not Dutchess, only, but Co-



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lumbia and Putnam, too, so when the offer was made to the experienced Chanler he received it with jeers, rather than with thanks. He knew he could be re-elected to the lower house, but he did not believe any Democrat could be elected to the State Senate from that district, and he had no desire to be a martyr; so when the matter was broached to him he promptly informed the leaders that he wasn't having any, and they turned to Roosevelt.

Chanler's course is not hard to understand. The Twenty-Sixth hadn't elected a Democratic Senator since 1884, and only one since 1856. There was, in 1910, no visible evidence that it would ever elect another. About the only reason for nominating a Democrat in this most unpromising district was to enable the party to put a full ticket in the field; so the nomination was no prize to be contended for by the faithful party workers, and to have spent any considerable portion of the party funds on the Senatorial candidate would have been nonsensical. Therefore the custom had become established of giving this nomination to some man whose standing in the community was sufficiently high to add prestige to the ticket, but who did not take his political ambition seriously enough to be embittered by the inevitable defeat. He must have money enough to be able to pay his own expenses without dipping into the party chest and, of course, he must have an unimpeachable Democratic record.

To Mayor Sague it seemed that young Roosevelt met these specifications perfectly. He was young, vigorous, presentable, of an excellent family that had been Democratic for generations. What more could be asked? The Mayor and his col-

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leagues, to do them justice, undoubtedly regarded the young man as able, but there is plenty of doubt that they ever dreamed that they were dealing with one of the most remarkable politicians in American history. It seems much less likely that they picked Roosevelt because they thought he was a genius than because they thought he was a sucker. Yet they are not to be sneered at on that account. In later years bigger men than John Sague made the same mistake with less excuse, and under circumstances that caused them bitter regret.

Indeed, if the Mayor of Poughkeepsie at heart viewed his new protege's political prospects somewhat lightly, he was in flatteringly respectable company. So did many, if not most, of Roosevelt's friends and associates. Especially disgusted was James C. Carter, head of the law firm with which the candidate was affiliated; to abandon a promising legal career to go haring off after any sort of political job seemed to the distinguished lawyer little short of madness, and he did not hesitate to express his opinion.

Probably Mr. Carter would have been more outraged than ever if someone had informed him that here, at last, his junior associate had found something into which he could throw himself with a single-minded devotion that he had never been able to bring to the law. But it was so. From the moment Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted that nomination he became a different man. At Groton, at Harvard, he had been content to amble along in the ruck; at Columbia law school he did not even take a degree. But in his new environment he was fiercely determined on nothing less than leading the class.

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All the leaders asked of him was to conduct a decorous, respectable campaign, and to accept defeat gracefully. Instead, he launched a whirlwind assault upon the district, going day and night, slaving at the job as he had never worked at anything before, resolved upon nothing less than victory.

He proceeded by methods of his own which some experienced politicians considered all wrong. Precedent decreed that the Senatorial candidate should make a few set speeches in the principal towns of the district, and let it go at that. If he invaded the rural districts—a proceeding of doubtful value, at best—he should travel as a humble man of the people. A carriage and pair would probably be regarded as vain ostentation; a buggy behind an old gray mare was the proper outfit.

But it was in this campaign that Roosevelt started his career as a political precedent-breaker. He toured the district in an automobile. It is difficult now to realize the audacity of this step, but in 1910 it jarred the Twenty-Sixth District right down to the grass-roots. By that time motor cars swarmed in the city, but in rural districts, even in rural New York, only a hundred miles from Manhattan, they were rarities. Roosevelt himself did not own one, but there was a man in the neighborhood, "a delightful character," Mrs. Roosevelt calls him, named Hawkey who had one with which he was willing to transport the candidate for hire. It had no top, but it would run, and in it Hawkey and Roosevelt covered the district in a fashion in which it had never been covered before.

Dire were the predictions made as to the result of this

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novel way of campaigning. The older people were still filled with suspicion of automobiles; the older politicians could foresee only two possible results, both disastrous. Half of them expected the contraption to explode, starting the candidate, like the Prophet Elijah, on the way to heaven in a chariot of fire; and those who looked for an end less spectacular were dismally certain that a candidate who came roaring down upon the farmers in a thunder-buggy would outrage their sensibilities so completely that he would not collect a rural vote in all three counties.

Both were wrong. Hawkey was probably something of a mechanical genius, for he kept the car rolling steadily, even over the roads of 1910. At every schoolhouse, at every country store, at every cross-roads where he could collect half a dozen listeners, Roosevelt spoke. In a cloud of dust and a hellish uproar he swept along the roads, stopping frequently to jump out, accost a farmer working in his fields, shake hands, say a few words, and depart. No Senatorial candidate had paid much attention to the rural districts within memory; and no candidate of any kind had ever appeared in such an unheard-of fashion. The farmers of the Twenty-Sixth were startled, indeed, but not outraged at all. On the contrary, they loved it!

When the returns were in, Roosevelt had carried the district by 1,140 votes, and all the experts agreed that the miracle was accomplished because the Democratic candidate was so unexpectedly strong in the rural districts.

It was in this year of 1910, when the man was twenty-eight years old, that the Roosevelt who is of significance to the out-

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side world began for the first time to emerge in recognizable form. In every eminent person there are, from the biographer's standpoint, two figures, the private and the public character. Sometimes they are almost completely fused, but the fusion is never quite complete; sometimes the private character is so colorless that it may be omitted from consideration with relative safety, as in the case of John C. Calhoun; sometimes, on the other hand, the private character is so colorful as to make it difficult to perceive the true outlines of the public character, as in the case of Andrew Jackson, and in such instances the biographer must walk warily indeed. Roosevelt comes between these two extremes. It is desirable, probably indispensable, to know something of the man's private life in order to understand his public career; but in his case it is not difficult to detect the very moment that the public character began to take shape. It was in the summer of 1910, when, for the first time in his life, Franklin D. Roosevelt actually went to work. Up to this time in every situation, in school, in college, in the professional school, in actual practice, he had performed just enough labor to satisfy the requirements of the situation, and little more. But from the moment he started his campaign for the State Senate he toiled like a galley slave, regardless of heat and cold, regardless of dust and rain, regardless of fatigue, regardless of everything except his grim determination to do just as good a job as he was capable of doing.

The private character of Roosevelt was already formed, of course—the friend and associate, the husband and father, the citizen of New York and of Hyde Park, all these aspects of

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the man date from earlier years, nor has this man altered much in any essential through the thirty years since. But this man is really important only to those immediately around him; the millions who know that their fate may lie in the President's hands are interested in the man who began to emerge at Albany in 1910.

It would be idle to pretend this was already a great man, but he was at least a grown man. For all his amiability and good sense there was still in the young man to whom Mayor Sague offered the nomination a little of the eternal sophomore, as there is in every man who has never had to extend himself. But the Senator who came to take his seat at the State capital at last had encountered that necessity. Winning that district was a hard job and Roosevelt had been just barely good enough to do it. If he had not put into the campaign everything he had, he would never have made it. But he did make it, and that gave him the right to look any politician in the eye, for none of them had won against heavier odds.

In many respects 1910 was an auspicious year for an ambitious young man beginning a political career. Things were in a turmoil, both in the State and in the nation, and at such periods youth often has chances not open to it in placid times, when the old men have the situation well in hand and are likely to look somewhat superciliously on the younger generation.

For one thing, Eleanor's Uncle Ted had been stamping and roaring through the land, upsetting applecarts right and left. Uncle Ted was not pleased with the man he had desig-

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nated as his successor in the White House two years earlier, and still less pleased with the way Boss William Barnes was running Republican affairs in the State of New York; and when Uncle Ted was not pleased, rattling windows, reeling walls and roofs flying off attested the fact to a fascinated world. In 1909 Uncle Ted had done the handsome thing by Mr. Taft; he had removed himself from the country, thereby giving the incumbent President a fair chance at the lime-light. Uncle Ted had gone, first, to hunt lions in Africa, and later, in Europe, to be hunted as the greatest social lion extant by every ambitious hostess on the continent. Rumors had been coming back of his triumphal progress. Rumors? Nay, thunderous roars, megaphoned by a brazen-throated press until they resounded in every village and hamlet.

Uncle Ted's enemies had assisted nobly. They loudly and scornfully accused the former President of having given George of England a little paternal advice on the proper management of an empire, and of having instructed William of Germany as to what to do with an army. But the effect was not what had been hoped for. Millions of Americans, placidly accepting the stories, drew from them one inference only, which was that these sovereigns, in consulting Teddy on any matter whatever were exhibiting rare good sense. It was true beyond dispute that the former President had been entertained by royalty wherever he went; which did anything but diminish his prestige among the commonalty in his own country.

Poor Mr. Taft, in the meantime, had proved himself wholly incapable of coping with astute gentlemen who knew exactly

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what they wanted in Washington, with the result that the Rooseveltian progressivism was being rapidly scuttled. Boss Barnes, too, had repeated the error of King Darius' presidents and princes in assuming that the lions would dispose of his enemy; or at least that he would never figure prominently in American politics again. So in 1910 he had a cut-and-dried program laid out for the State convention which was utterly wrecked when Theodore Roosevelt stormed in, captured the convention and dictated the nomination of Henry L. Stimson for Governor. Barnes, bitterly resentful, quietly drew his knife and lay in wait for the candidate at the ballot box in November.

The Democrats seeing all this, hopefully put up a very good man, John A. Dix, and laid themselves out to elect him. With Barnes knifing his own party's ticket, not only did they succeed in electing Dix but, to their own amazement, they captured the Legislature as well. So on January 1, 1911, Franklin D. Roosevelt, arriving in Albany, found himself a member of the majority, which nobody had expected.

The new Senator determined to do the thing right in office as he had in the campaign. Instead of making short visits to the capital, or taking quarters in a hotel, he rented a house, brought his family to the city, and settled down for the session.

The sensational developments that followed have been analyzed over and over again, by Mr. Roosevelt's friends and by his foes, but it all comes down to this—an old politician lost his head, and a young one kept his, with the result that a new star rose in the political firmament.



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The magnitude of the Democratic victory of 1910 was too much for the common sense of Charles E. Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall, and by long odds the biggest Democratic boss in the State. With the Governorship, the Legislature and everything else in Democratic hands, Murphy apparently decided that there was no limit to what he could do. He conceived that it was possible, in this moment of unprecedented triumph, even to elect William F. Sheehan, known as "Blue-Eyed Billy," to the United States Senate. Senators at that time were elected by the Legislature. One hundred and one constituted a majority of both houses, the minimum required to elect; and the Democrats had a total of one hundred and fourteen in the Senate and Assembly combined. The customary procedure was to hold a caucus of the Democratic members and choose a candidate; thereafter all who attended the caucus were honor bound to vote for the party candidate.

All Murphy needed, then, was to round up one hundred and one Democrats in the caucus. Even if many of them supported one or another of the half-dozen candidates who were in the race besides Sheehan, it would not matter; for Murphy was aware that he had at least sixty-two absolutely reliable votes, and they would be sufficient to bind the rest. He anticipated no trouble, for his organization in both houses was excellent. In fact, he had conceded much to the progressive spirit of the times, for instead of appointing two of his old war-horses as majority leaders he had installed a pair of young politicians, both able, both liberal, and both free of any taint of corruption—and both, incidentally, marked by

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destiny for conspicuous careers. These were Robert F. Wagner in the Senate, and Alfred E. Smith in the Assembly.

As for Sheehan, there is some reason to doubt that he was really Murphy's personal choice, but the boss was in an embarrassing position. Blue-Eyed Billy had been enormously valuable to Murphy in the past. He had money of his own, and he didn't mind spending it for the party. More important still, he had access to a great deal more money, for he was counsel for a dozen big corporations and he understood the art of making his clients contribute heavily. In the campaign just ended, from him, or through him, had come a large part of the money the Democrats had used in their successful fight. None of it came to Franklin D. Roosevelt. He paid his own expenses. But a considerable number of the Democratic members felt that they owed their victory to Sheehan, and Boss Murphy knew that he owed the lawyer a great deal. Nor was there any party exigency that would have justified him in refusing to acknowledge the debt at this time. Had the majority been a slender one, he might have pleaded the danger of a split; but the Democrats had thirteen votes more than they needed.

The objection to Sheehan was not based on any notorious scandal in his record, but on the fact that he was the very archetype of the old conservative, one of the Bourbons who could neither learn anything nor forget anything. He was a law partner of Judge Alton B. Parker, that extreme conservative whom the Democrats had run for President, with complete disaster, in 1904. He was a perfect specimen of the political agents of great wealth, and his regard for the in-

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terests of people who did not possess wealth was, to put it mildly, inconspicuous. In short, he was exactly the type that the Democratic party in the nation was making a prodigious effort to remove from power. His election to the Senate would have been inconsistent with the party's record and would have been a handicap upon the party in the Presidential campaign of 1912. Both morally and politically, Sheehan was a flagrantly bad choice. Perhaps Charlie Murphy knew it, but what could he do? He owed the man a debt, and he thought he had the power to pay it. That, of course, was where his judgment slipped; but it is easy to see how, at the time, Murphy felt that he had to back Sheehan.

But young Senator Roosevelt owed Blue-Eyed Billy nothing, and he owed nothing to Charles E. Murphy, either. He had, moreover, a keen perception of the way things were going in the nation, and he knew that the election of Sheehan would be a slap in the face for those elements in the Democratic party that, in Roosevelt's opinion, were the hope of the party and of the nation. On the other hand, he was a young man, just starting a political career, and it was generally conceded that the boss of Tammany Hall held the power of political life and death over young Democratic politicians in New York. With his victory in the Twenty-Sixth Roosevelt had made an excellent start. Murphy could use such campaigners and Roosevelt knew it. This very effort to elect Sheehan was proof that Murphy was always willing to pay handsomely for services rendered. Should the young aspirant risk blasting what seemed to be an excellent chance of advancement by offending, at the very start, the most power-

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ful party leader in the State? For if Charlie Murphy could reward handsomely, he could also punish relentlessly. To defy him on this point would mean war to the knife.

When word came up from New York city that Murphy was backing Sheehan, Roosevelt spent hours tramping about the streets of Albany trying to make up his mind. To understand his perturbation, one must bear in mind the fact that, while his principles were liberal, he was not at all a revolutionist. He had not come to Albany cherishing any wild ideas about unhorsing Murphy and demolishing Tammany. He knew well enough that Tammany was corrupt; but he also knew that without organization no party can function. Roosevelt's own candidate was Edward M. Shepard, an independent Democrat; but if Murphy had chosen to name any of half a dozen excellent men in his organization, Roosevelt would have acquiesced cheerfully enough and voted for the man after being bound by the caucus.

But Blue-Eyed Billy was too much. Maybe Bob Wagner and Al Smith would have to swallow him, for they were, after all, Tammany men, and revolt would have meant for them instant political decapitation. But Roosevelt was an up-State Democrat. Murphy hadn't put him in the Senate, and Murphy couldn't throw him out. Murphy could make things pretty nasty for him, but his political life did not depend on appeasing the boss, as these others, did. Could he, then, vote for Sheehan and retain his own self-respect? He decided that he could not.

Up to this point his course was merely that of a decent man called on to do something that he regarded as indecent.

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In refusing, he was doing no more than his duty, and the Roosevelts always did their duty. The old Roosevelt, that is, the pre-1910 Roosevelt, would have been satisfied with that. But here the new Roosevelt showed up again. Having decided what was his duty, he determined to do more than his duty. He determined to make a good job of it. He began inquiring diligently among other members of the Legislature and found, to his pleasure, that a considerable number of others felt as he did. In the end, he persuaded eighteen Assemblymen to join him in issuing a manifesto in which they declared they would never vote for Sheehan, no matter what the caucus did, and therefore they would not participate in the caucus.

This was serious, because the defection of eighteen Assemblymen and a Senator reduced the total Democratic votes available to ninety-five, not enough to elect. Still Murphy was not worried. He had seen many revolts staged by ebullient young men, and he thought he knew how to deal with them. Even when it developed that a few others, who had not signed the manifesto, yet were encouraged by it to stay away from the caucus, so that Murphy could deliver only ninety-one votes to Sheehan, he was not seriously worried. He gave orders to turn on the heat, and sat back to watch the revolt crumble.

But it didn't crumble. The heat went on in very vigorous fashion. Roosevelt had succeeded in getting a job in the State Forestry Department for one constituent. That constituent was promptly fired. Some of the other insurgents had been promised patronage of various sorts. Those promises were

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cancelled. Still the revolt continued. Then the machine really went to work. The record, private and public, of every man in the group was scrutinized for something that might be used as a lever. It was found that some of the men owed money. Pressure was put upon the banks and their notes were called; but Roosevelt, after some pretty frantic scrambling, found means to take care of the notes. The insurgents stood fast.

By this time the Senator from Dutchess was by no means alone. The fight had attracted widespread attention, and many men, some of them able politicians, who disliked Murphy's methods, began giving the group aid and comfort. The business of the Legislature stalled. Nothing could be accomplished while this war raged. Minor leaders were frantic, but Murphy by this time was thoroughly aroused and grimly determined. This is where he lost his head. He was reputed to be a shrewd judge of men, yet on this occasion he utterly misunderstood the quality of the leader he was opposing. He might have had peace at any time by withdrawing Sheehan and substituting any name from a list the insurgents gave him—all names of good Tammany men. But no, he would not have it so. He decided that his own prestige required that this young upstart should be slapped down, and for ten long weeks he continued to slap frantically, to the vast delight of the Republican and independent newspapers, who never ceased to rub salt into his wounds.

What betrayed the leader of Tammany Hall into an error that brought him into ridicule, and weakened his grip on his own organization? No one but Murphy could answer that

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authoritatively, and he never did. It seems probable, however, that it was a miscalculation that has been repeated since, not once, but many times, by men some of whom were at least as shrewd as Murphy. It was an incapacity to distinguish between gaiety and levity.

Murphy had the notion, not uncommon among humorless men, that a serious man never smiles. This one smiled incessantly, nay, laughed uproariously; therefore he couldn't be serious. He turned his rented house into an unofficial headquarters of the insurgents. Thither they repaired every day, after casting the usual vote against Sheehan; there they stayed all day, laughing and joking, and smoking so many cigars that they drove Mrs. Roosevelt and the children to the third story. There they remained, day after day, week after week, in high good humor, blandly content with the situation, joyously rejecting promises, threats and cajolery; and the leading spirit, who kept them entertained, was the Senator from the Twenty-Sixth.

There is no evidence either way, but it seems likely that Murphy's fury was exacerbated by the merriment of his opponent. Certainly that has been true of others who have fought against Roosevelt. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," saith Scripture, but not to him whose bad luck it is to oppose the merry-hearted. Indeed, Mr. Roosevelt's laughter has been a bitter trial to all solemn fellows, even those who have supported him; while to those whom he has defeated it has been the drop of purest gall in the whole bitter cup.

In any event, after ten weeks the last straw was laid upon

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the backs of the supporters of Murphy. A fire at the Capitol wrecked the hall in which the joint sessions were held, and they had to be transferred to crowded, stuffy and generally uncomfortable temporary quarters. Murmurs from the ranks swelled into bitter protests, and at last the stubborn old boss had to acknowledge that he was licked. He offered to withdraw Sheehan's name.

The victors were wise enough not to try to impose harsh terms. "Who the Senator will be we do not know as yet," Roosevelt had said right in the beginning, "but we do know that it will not be Sheehan." It was not Sheehan, but it was a Tammany man, Supreme Court Justice James A. O'Gorman, who was known as a just judge, a liberal, and a man of unstained personal character.

Yet the defeat of Sheehan and the election of O'Gorman are events of small significance now. What makes the fight historic is the fact that it projected into tremendous prominence the young Senator from Dutchess County. The effort to slap him down had simply made Franklin D. Roosevelt a figure of State importance during his first term in his first public office.

He won re-election and served another term in the State Senate. He supported a variety of liberal legislation, including the direct primary. But he was already moving out upon a larger stage than that of the State of New York.

Like young and ardent Democrats everywhere, he had been fascinated by the emergence into politics of the university president who was now Governor of New Jersey. Every



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utterance and every act of Woodrow Wilson at Trenton strengthened Roosevelt's conviction that here was the leader for whom the Democratic party had been waiting. The time was propitious. The ineptitude of Taft had flung the Republican party into a hopeless snarl, and it was becoming clearer every day that Eleanor's Uncle Ted could not restrain himself or be restrained very much longer; and if he broke loose the already confused situation would become indescribable. Obviously, then, it was desperately urgent that the Democratic party should put up the strongest candidate available. To Roosevelt's way of thinking it was plain that this was Wilson.

But it was by no means so plain to Murphy and Tammany Hall. On the contrary, from their point of view, a Republican would be preferable to Wilson from every standpoint save that of Federal patronage; for Tammany knew the trick of getting along very amiably with the powers of corporate wealth that Wilson had been attacking. Tammany, therefore, swung to Champ Clark.

As a party man Roosevelt no doubt regretted this, but it offered him one great personal advantage. With Murphy and his cohorts whooping for Clark, the way was open for an energetic young State Senator to play a conspicuous part in organizing what Wilson forces were available in New York State. After his spectacular fight against Sheehan, he had a reputation as an organizer that made the older Wilson leaders delighted to have him as a recruit, and they gladly made room for him in the forefront of the organization. He was not the only Wilson leader in the State, but by the time the

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convention met at Baltimore he was recognized as an important one. Moreover, his ebullient enthusiasm during that intensely dramatic combat emphasized his position; and by the time Bryan, like a wild bull of Nebraska, had wrecked the Champ Clark china shop, it was generally recognized that young Mr. Roosevelt must have a prominent part in the management of the Democratic campaign in the State.

He played such a part, and when the victory was won in November nobody denied that he was in line for something handsome from the new Administration—not a Cabinet post, of course, but certainly one of the better minor jobs. Collector of the Port of New York was suggested, but it made little appeal to him, although it was the sort of job in which a young man might make excellent business connections to be used after his retirement from office. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury was also mentioned, and this, as an introduction to business, was even better; but that did not satisfy him, either. Then the new Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, offered to take him on as Assistant Secretary, and his acceptance was instantaneous.

This decision was due mainly to his life-long interest in the navy, and perhaps in some small measure to the fact that Theodore Roosevelt, early in his career, had held the same post. But there was another important contributing factor which deserves more than bare mention because it illuminates strongly one aspect of Roosevelt's mentality. This was his instant liking for the man who was to be his chief—a liking that has endured through all the years since.

Superficially there seemed to be as little in common be-

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tween Franklin D. Roosevelt and Josephus Daniels as between any two men one can call to mind. Roosevelt at this time was the very summation of the young aristocrat, New York born, Harvard bred, polished by cosmopolitan society and much travel. Daniels was incontestably—one is tempted to say, ostentatiously—plebeian, North Carolina born, not a graduate of any college, polite enough but making a point of maintaining a rustic simplicity in speech and manner. Roosevelt was never a fop, but he patronized a good tailor and was always turned out in whatever happened to be the prevailing mode. Daniels, on the other hand, was never a sloven, but he had a positive genius for making an expensive coat look like the conventional garb of a colporteur in the North Carolina sandhills. He affected black string ties, and one of the mysteries of Washington was where he got his hats—of black felt, just high enough in the crown to escape classification as the shovel hat of an English clergyman. From head to heels, Roosevelt was the smart, young New York lawyer; at first glance Daniels might have been taken for a middle-aged Southern evangelist.

That is, in fact, precisely what he was taken for by a good many men whose judgment, ordinarily, was keen. There was a terrific howl when this man was given the Navy portfolio; and there was a legend at the time that many naval officers, after one look at their new chief, went into fainting fits. Considering his background, his training and his previous experience, it might have been expected that Roosevelt would be almost the last man to estimate Daniels at something like his true value. But they liked each other from their first meet-

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ing and the younger man was not long in discovering that his superior was very far indeed from being the bumpkin that men of small perception considered him. Behind that bland smile and somewhat pietistic appearance lurked a shrewd and powerful intelligence, backed by a strong will and plenty of courage.

Apparently Daniels put on record only one reason for selecting Roosevelt as his assistant, and that a frivolous one, namely, that he was the handsomest young man the Southerner had encountered in Washington. But it was not for nothing that Daniels had been in charge of publicity at Democratic headquarters during the campaign. Nobody appreciated better than he the excellent effect of having a Democrat named Roosevelt incorporated in the Wilson Administration. No doubt five minutes' conversation with the young man satisfied him, too, that here was exactly the fellow to deal suavely with admirals just coming to the boiling-point, and with ensigns on the point of cracking under the weight of the world's injustice. But these were reasons that he could not very well avow in public, so he said only that he liked Roosevelt's looks, and let the world guess the rest.

The combination worked with amazing smoothness. The Secretary of the Navy had been a strong Bryan man even before the Cross of Gold speech in 1896, so many people, including half the navy, suspected him of sharing Bryan's pacifistic views. Naval officers therefore naturally gravitated to the Assistant Secretary, as a man they could understand; but this, far from arousing jealous suspicion in the older man, suited his method of operation exactly. Let Roosevelt and

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the admirals work out the technical problems; the Secretary would go into action when the time came to get the appropriations through Congress. In that field a taint of pacifism was perhaps an asset, for members of Congress were likely to argue that when a Bryanite came demanding money for the Navy, money must be needed badly indeed.

At the start, it was widely believed that with Josephus Daniels at the head of the department the Navy would be cut to the bone. The first year the Democrats were in power, the fiscal year of 1913, it did suffer a cut of \$2,000,000; but once the Daniels-Roosevelt combination got to work in a big way nothing like that happened again. In the fiscal year 1914 the appropriation, made before the beginning of the European war, jumped from \$133,000,000 to just under \$140,000,000, more money than had ever been spent on the Navy in a single year in all its history. Once the war burst over Europe, getting appropriations for the Navy became easier, of course; but the rise had started long before any but the most competent and best-informed observers in this country had any idea of what was brewing.

In the year 1914 an episode occurred that is a little difficult to fit smoothly into the rest of Roosevelt's career. In that year he ran for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator from New York, and suffered the only real, personal defeat he ever encountered. He went down in the general wreckage of the Democratic party in 1920, to be sure, but nobody ever regarded that as a personal defeat for Roosevelt. In 1914, however, he was soundly beaten on his own appeal.

Why he did it never has been made altogether clear. He

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thought that it was President Wilson's desire that he make the race, and he was probably right. There were two or three reasons for this, exclusive of personal preferences. The election of 1914 was the first under the direct primary system, which had been touted as the means of eliminating boss control; it would have been desirable, therefore, for the first election under it to return a candidate who was a conspicuous foe of the bosses—and who fitted this description better than the man who had fought Boss Murphy to a standstill on the very point of election of a United States Senator? In addition it would have been satisfactory to have a member of the Administration returned by the State of New York. Finally, Wilson's control of the Senate was jeopardized by the presence in that body of a number of Democratic Senators who were Democrats in name only, and who loathed Wilson's progressive policies as heartily as any Republican. The President could make very good use of an additional vigorous and completely loyal member.

But Murphy was nobody's fool. To name one of his henchmen as United States Senator was, from his standpoint, desirable, but by no means of primary importance. He could much better afford to lose control of a Senate seat than to risk another defeat at the hands of young Roosevelt. Accordingly, he countered with a shrewd move—he threw his support to James W. Gerard, who was not by any means one of his henchmen, and who was then Wilson's ambassador to Germany. Obviously, the President could not oppose a man who was serving him acceptably in an increasingly difficult post, which meant that he could not support Roosevelt ef-

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fectively. Roosevelt tried to make an issue of bossism, but nobody believed that Gerard was under the control of Tammany, and the campaign went haltingly from the beginning. Murphy's machine was working splendidly, and although Roosevelt carried up-State New York, the city vote snowed him under. Gerard beat him in the primary, only to lose to James W. Wadsworth in the election.

Many alibis have been constructed to explain away this, the only first-class whipping Roosevelt ever took in politics, but they are all pretty frail. The truth is that for the first and only time in his career he was clearly out-generaled. For once he rushed into a campaign without first making sure of his lines of communication, and the wily old Tammany veteran promptly cut them. If Roosevelt expected to depend on White House support he should have ascertained, before committing himself to the venture, that no other good Wilson man would, or could, be brought out against him. It is probable, however, that the lesson it taught him made the defeat well worth while. From that day to this he has never gone into a campaign without knowing not only where his backing lies, but also exactly how dependable it is; and as a result he has never since been cut off by a pincer movement.

As a matter of fact, it is probable that long before the election, in November, 1914, he was well satisfied not to be involved in a senatorial campaign, because the outbreak of war in Europe suddenly made his post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy not only much more important than it had been, but vividly interesting, as well. It would be silly to pretend that Roosevelt was such a Delphic oracle that he foresaw

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from the beginning the course that the struggle was to take; but on August 4, 1914, the day England declared war, he did see with the utmost clarity that a powerful navy was urgently, imperatively necessary to the security, and probably to the very existence of the United States.

But he saw more than the obvious truth that the Navy should be stronger—he perceived, with no less clarity, exactly where it was then weakest. This perception, it may be, was the greatest contribution that Franklin D. Roosevelt made to the winning of the war of 1917-18. Before the war broke in Europe he had been in office well over a year and he had made a pretty thorough examination of the establishment. He was particularly well equipped to do this because he was enough of a sailor himself to understand not merely the language but also the mental processes of sea-faring men, including naval men; yet at the same time, he was a civilian, and therefore less preoccupied with fighting craft than most of the professionals were. As a civilian, he saw plainly that the weakness of our fleet in 1914 was not in its fighting ships, nor in its personnel, but in its shore stations—the bases of supply, the yards where ships are repaired, the arsenals, the training stations. The natural and legitimate desire of every junior officer in the service is to command a battleship. Not many men are gnawed by ambition to command a coaling station, or even a navy yard.

The inevitable result was that these places for years had not been subjected to the sharp scrutiny given to the smallest detail of the operation of ships, and their efficiency had slowly deteriorated. It was Roosevelt's task to correct this,



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and he threw himself into it with all the energy he had exhibited in his first political campaign. In her autobiography Mrs. Roosevelt recalls with rueful amazement the schedules of some of the trips of inspection on which she accompanied him. At times sleep was practically eliminated for days. The Assistant Secretary was into everything, scrutinizing everything, checking and cross-checking everything, running the legs off the officers detailed to show him around, and disconcerting them by his memory and his capacity for detail.

Under this regimen the shore establishments swiftly took on life and vigor. An example of the reforms he instituted may be found in the iron-clad regulation he issued that every naval ship returning to her base should instantly load stores of all kinds for her next voyage. Afterward, but not until afterward, her men and officers might be given shore leave. Some there were, of course, who looked upon this as a fine example of bureaucratic crankiness, but the test of it soon came. In 1914 Roosevelt sent a hurry call for two ships to proceed at once to Vera Cruz. Under the old system it might have taken them three or four days to load supplies, but under the new, they were already loaded, and according to Lindley, who tells the story, the first ship was hull down two hours after the telegram was received. After that, criticism of the new system subsided.

All this work made little impression on the general public, for there was little about it that the general public could see. It did nothing toward covering the seas with battleships, or filling the ports with uniformed men. Nevertheless, it was good work, and the Navy knew it. Fleet operation went more

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and more smoothly, and more and more the impression spread through the service that here was a man who could get things done. Navy men were still skittish of Daniels, but presently they began to realize that Roosevelt had Daniels' confidence, and they knew Roosevelt was all right. Confidence began to rise throughout the service, and as the war grew more threatening, instead of sinking, it rose higher and higher.

What most Navy men did not realize at the time was why Roosevelt was content to serve under Daniels. Roosevelt knew, as the officers did not, how Daniels was slaving day and night trying to swing Congress and the President into line for a really big increase in naval power. Finally, in 1916, events gave his arguments irresistible power. Wilson demanded a bigger navy and the appropriation jumped to three hundred millions.

That the Assistant Secretary of the Navy viewed the approach of war with apprehension bordering upon horror there is no manner of doubt. So did every rational man, and he was highly rational. That he was working as he had never worked before there is also no manner of doubt. The sheer mass of the documents that moved across his desk proves it. That he took his responsibility with the utmost seriousness is beyond dispute. He was hard-driven, he was anxious, he was grimly determined. Yet, admitting the truth of all this, one cannot escape the impression that, in spite of everything, he was having the time of his life.

In 1917 he was thirty-five years old, at the very crest of his physical vigor and just reaching the full maturity of his

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mental powers. He had an enormous job to do, and enormous resources with which to do it. He had the confidence of his superior officer, and the enthusiastic loyalty of his inferiors. He had no doubt of what was the right course, nor any fear that the goal was unattainable. Think it over and ask yourself what more could a first-rate man desire? Fortune has always dealt as an extremist with Franklin D. Roosevelt. He has always been either her darling, or her red-headed step-child. But Fortune never smiles upon any man of ability more graciously than when she gives him the triple gift of a gigantic job, the power to do it, and the opportunity to use that power. All these came to him with the outbreak of the war; how could he fail to be a happy man?

It was his course of action during the war that furnishes one of the most convincing proofs of the essential Americanism of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Yet it was a course of action that is fit to drive a strict logician to despair. He himself said afterward that he broke enough laws in the course of the war to send him to jail for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. More than that, it is probably true. But a certain sort of lawlessness has always been a distinctively American trait. Perhaps the most gigantic single act of law-breaking in our national history was perpetrated by Thomas Jefferson in making the Louisiana Purchase. He had no authority whatever to do it. In his own opinion he violated the Constitution grossly in doing it. But not for one moment was it condemned by public opinion in the United States; and when Jefferson suggested appealing to Congress for an act of amnesty, his

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House leader, John Randolph, threatened to resign rather than introduce such an act.

Andrew Jackson violated not merely the Constitution, but the Articles of War, international law and every other code when he invaded Florida in 1819. But one of the most rigidly honorable men in American history, John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, violently protested against repudiation of the general's act, although it meant more trouble for the State department than for anybody else. Most authorities now agree that Abraham Lincoln was on extremely doubtful ground when he suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*, and definitely violated the law in permitting Vallandigham to be tried by a court-martial while the civil courts were still open. But public opinion exonerated him.

It is the American theory that the law, "by reason of its universality," as the definition of equity has it, at times operates definitely against the public interest; and when a public official, at such times, sets the law aside, it is flatly impossible to bring him to account for his illegal action. The common sense of the people holds that, at such times, scrupulous observance of the law is more blameworthy than its defiance.

Without doubt, this is a dangerous doctrine, but it is incontestably American. Indeed, it has already given us occasion for regret, on more than one occasion. Yet it has worked pretty well, on the whole. There is no convincing evidence, in fact, that it is more dangerous than a rigid adherence to legal formalism.

The difficulty that Daniels and Roosevelt faced, and that all the other officers of the government faced, at the outbreak

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of war was the fact that the operations of a democratic government are designed to function with maximum efficiency in time of peace. The prescribed processes of spending the public money are designed to obviate, as far as possible, the principal danger in time of peace, which is that the money will be wasted or stolen. The best way of meeting this danger is to subject every expenditure to checking and re-checking by different authorities. To begin with, expenditures may be recommended by the executive, but they can be authorized only by the legislative. The authorizations, furthermore, must originate in the larger branch of the legislative, and be examined and approved by the smaller before they can be submitted to the President, by whom they must be examined and approved again before the money becomes available.

But when an appropriation bill has been passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President, the process of actually spending the money has only begun. Every requisition has to be made out in multiple form to be scrutinized by a variety of officials. Every contract carries extremely elaborate specifications and must be examined repeatedly in minute detail, which necessarily means in leisurely fashion. Even after the work has been begun, the Federal inspection system is rigid—so much so that many contractors are wary of dealing with the government.

When the main object to be gained is to prevent the misuse of public money, whether through dishonesty or through incompetence, this system is logical enough. But once war has begun, time becomes a commodity infinitely more precious than money, and the governmental system is extravagantly

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wasteful of time. Yet it is the only system recognized by law. It is the system imposed by law upon officials, and any departure from it is a violation of law. Nevertheless, if the men charged with responsibility for the defense of the country in time of war always adhered rigidly to every provision of the law governing the expenditure of money, they would incur a grave risk of permitting the defenses to collapse. What, then, is to be done?

We might, of course, reorganize our system, making it more efficient for war purposes; but if we did that, it is certain that it would be less efficient for peace purposes, or at least for the purposes of a democracy at peace. We have always held that peace is the normal condition of this country, and that it is for peace that it ought to be organized. The American theory has always been that in emergencies a high government official ought to use his common sense, rather than rely on legalism. He ought to get the work done, and if he has to risk going to jail to do it, well, in time of war other men are taking graver risks than that. The only unpardonable crime in a high official during a national emergency is to permit his department to slack off and let its part of the work fall behind. If he delivers the goods, and doesn't actually steal anything himself, he is usually absolved by public opinion, and generally by the juries in courts of law, of guilt for technical infractions of the statutes.

Roosevelt and his chief, Daniels, were both profoundly American, so both understood this point of view perfectly. Roosevelt had in hand the actual negotiation of most of the contracts. Daniels' part was to protect his assistant from in-

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terference, either by persons whose wish was to retard the program, or by well-meaning fanatics. They worked together perfectly. Red tape was slashed ruthlessly. All sorts of shortcuts were taken. The business of the navy moved with unprecedented speed. Yet afterwards, when the inevitable investigations were undertaken, the most searching examination failed to reveal where a single high officer of the department, commissioned or civilian, had misappropriated a dollar. More than that, they were not cleared of the suspicion of criminality only, but no instance was brought to light where any considerable sum had been wasted through sheer stupidity. Once again the American theory, illogical though it may be, survived triumphantly the test of actual application.

Roosevelt's contribution to this work included, however, something more noteworthy than merely a resolute smashing of hampering rules within the department. He was also astonishingly successful in persuading businessmen to gamble on his integrity and ability. An instance occurred right at the beginning of the war. It was realized that under the conditions obtaining in 1917 the chance that the Americans would ever encounter the German High-Seas Fleet was remote; their first efforts would certainly be directed against submarines and rather lightly-armed raiders. For this purpose the huge guns of the battleships' main batteries were of less importance than great numbers of lighter ordnance. In the course of time an appropriation for this purpose was passed by Congress and signed by the President. This was the Navy's first legal permission to buy; but it came out presently that

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a good deal of the stuff was already in process of manufacture and would soon be delivered. It developed that the Assistant Secretary, without any legal authority, had inveigled manufacturers to start work on forty million dollars' worth of three-, four-, and five-inch guns, depth charges, ammunition, and other equipment. These business men had no contracts, no legally-executed orders, nothing whatever to protect them save the personal assurance of the Assistant Secretary that they would be paid as soon as Congress supplied the funds; but on this simple assurance they risked staggering sums.

Their confidence was justified, of course. None of them lost a dollar, for Congress did supply the money, and they were paid promptly. Nevertheless, the story speaks eloquently of the man's powers of persuasion.

Such incidents were repeated many times. Lindley cites one told by Elliot C. Brown, a New York contractor, regarding a receiving-ship cantonment for three thousand men in New York City. Roosevelt went up and looked over the site on June 27; Brown was given oral orders to go ahead on June 28; plans were started June 29, ground was broken July 5, the work practically completed August 4 and breakfast was served to sixty-eight hundred men August 11. Two months later the contracts for the job were officially awarded! A matter of four hundred thousand dollars was involved, but the contractor didn't worry. Roosevelt had said he would be paid, and he had never a doubt that paid he would be.

After the war was well under way, however, after the initial kinks had been straightened out and the departmental machinery was running like a well-built clock, the Assistant



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Secretary began to strain at the leash. He yearned to get into a uniform. Viewed coldly and analytically, this was foolish, for he was already placed exactly where he belonged. But it was a very human and appealing weakness. After all, he was a young man, physically vigorous, and a desk job irks such a man when others are risking their lives.

More than that, Roosevelt still stood in the shadow of a great name. The hero-worship of a lifetime is not to be cast off in a day, and echoes of the bugles of San Juan yet shrilled in his memory. Eleanor's Uncle Ted, sixty years old now, had made every possible effort to obtain command of a division. The day of amateur generals was gone, and his request was refused, but the country honored the impulse that spurred him to ask. His sons were in France, making honorable records; soon one, Quentin, was to fall in battle. All this was bound to react upon the Roosevelt who was pinned to a desk, three thousand miles from the battle line.

But for once Daniels was unsympathetic with his subordinate's views and so was Wilson. The hard-headed newspaper editor, and the hard-pressed Presbyterian elder were not the men to be much stirred by thirst for military glory. Roosevelt was a valuable man where he was—much more valuable than he would be at sea, or commanding a battery of naval guns in France. They stolidly refused to let him go. Daniels did relent enough to send him on a tour of inspection of naval establishments in the war zone, and it was about that time that he determined, as soon as he got back, to hand in his resignation, regardless of his superior's disapproval, and transfer to the fighting line. He knew he could find a berth

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with the contingent taking over some great naval rifles mounted on railway trucks for use on land. But he got more than information on this trip of inspection—he got the flu, as well. He came down with it on the return trip and was taken off on a stretcher at New York, a very sick man; by the time he recovered, the war was practically over, so he never wore a uniform, after all.

There is no need to present here a detailed account of Roosevelt's activities as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, although many of them—his connection with the North Sea mine barrage, for example—were of high importance and make fascinating stories in themselves. The point worth emphasizing here is that in these days two of his strongly American traits came conspicuously into view. One of these was his swift and shrewd appreciation of such a man as Daniels, an American to the core, but as different from Roosevelt as day from night. It is difficult to believe that an English aristocrat would ever have understood the Tar Heel; it is a moral certainty that no other European aristocrat would have understood him. It took an American to see beyond the deceptive exterior of Wilson's Secretary of the Navy. The second was Roosevelt's exhibition of the national tendency to set more value upon common sense than upon strict legality in the face of a great emergency.

Possibly a third national trait was his burning desire to drop his proper business and go charging off to the battle-line as soon as a fight broke out; but it seems reasonable to believe that this was youth, rather than Americanism. Young men of every nation usually exhibit a similar tendency. True,

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Roosevelt was thirty-six years old in 1918, but a great deal of youthful ebullieny still clung to him. Besides, it was no mere search for adventure that appealed to him; a great and desperate war was in progress, and the country did have need of young and vigorous men at the front. Physically and mentally the Roosevelt of 1918 had attained his full stature; but one may cherish some doubt that he was as yet emotionally mature. Emotional maturity is a matter, not of years, but of experience. Many men have not attained it at seventy, so there is nothing inherently improbable in the guess that Roosevelt had not attained it at thirty-six.

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy was in France again during the Peace Conference, but not as a delegate, nor as an attending expert. He was busy clearing away the debris. The Navy had set up a fairly elaborate establishment on French soil—nothing comparable to that of the Army, of course, but including such items as one of the most powerful radio stations in the world, at Bordeaux, fifty-four naval bases, and large numbers of barracks, warehouses and other buildings, housing a great deal of machinery and stores of all descriptions. Some of this was worth hauling back across the Atlantic, but not much; the sensible thing was to dispose of most of it where it lay for whatever it would bring. But this involved a great deal of negotiating and book-keeping, which absorbed Roosevelt's time until February, except for one brief trip to the Rhine and a stolen look at the battlefields. On this second trip red tape worked for, rather than against him, for he took Mrs. Roosevelt with him, and not until they

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were back in Paris did he receive formal notification that he must not take her, as women were not permitted in that zone.

But in February he came close to the heart of events, for in that month the Roosevelts returned to this country on the *George Washington* which was also bringing the President, coming back for the last great battle of his career, the lost battle. During the voyage Roosevelt saw a great deal of Woodrow Wilson, and perhaps learned more about the man than he had ever known before. It was then that someone pointed out to him the desk at which Wilson wrote the first draft of the League of Nations Covenant and the chair in which he sat; later Roosevelt acquired that desk and chair, and they are among his most treasured possessions to this day.

For more than twenty years historians had no reason to regard these interviews with any great interest, but history has wheeled around since 1939 in such a fashion that they are now among the most dramatic meetings in the nation's annals. At the time none of the by-standers, and not even the participants, had much reason to suppose that they would fascinate a later generation; but the world knows now that the older man was faced by one who was to be not merely his successor in office, but also his successor in the frightful responsibility of bearer of the hopes of free men.

What Roosevelt's thoughts were on these occasions may not be known today even by the President himself. It is hardly likely that they ranged as far ahead as 1941, for he is no seventh son of a seventh son, and in that confused era it was a veritable soothsayer who could see a week ahead, not to mention twenty-two years. But the younger man unques-

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tionably was aware that things were not going too well. No politician of any competence—and he was an extremely competent one—had failed to note the ominous effect of Wilson's appeal for a Democratic Congress in 1918, to which the country had responded by giving control of the House to the Republicans.

The disastrous Retreat from Geneva had begun. No one could foresee the magnitude of that disaster—indeed, it is far from certain that we have measured it, even yet—but all alert men were aware of trouble ahead. Wilson talked to Roosevelt of the League of Nations. That the younger man fully understood the older one need not necessarily be assumed. Who, indeed, dare say that he understands that great, solitary spirit even yet? Certainly there is not much evidence that he who was to be Wilson's successor was ever touched by the mystical quality so conspicuous in his predecessor; but out of these talks he did obtain a remarkably clear understanding of the plain, common sense that underlay the effort to prevent future wars by collective action of free nations. His speeches in the campaign that followed reveal this. "It is important not to dissect the document. The important thing is first to approve the general plan." That was his line. "The same arguments that have been advanced against the League of Nations were advanced against the Constitutional Convention—and that proved to be a very satisfactory operation in the end."

But appeals to reason were as hopeless as appeals to emotion. The retreat was on, and Roosevelt, like all the rest, was whirled along by the torrent as helplessly as a cork bobbing

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in one of the Bay of Fundy tides he knew so well. The hand of God struck Wilson down, and after that the retreat degenerated into a rout.

The election of 1920 approached. Practical politicians in the Democratic party wished to get as far away from Wilson and the League as they could without absolutely repudiating their own party record. They went out of the Administration for a candidate, choosing James M. Cox, of Ohio; but to avoid the appearance of total repudiation it was essential to name as his running-mate someone who had some connection with Wilson. Why not the Assistant Secretary of the Navy? He was a grand campaigner, he was a New Yorker, he was a Roosevelt, he was approved by Wilson, but he had had nothing to do with framing the ill-fated Covenant. Obviously, he was the ideal choice, and he was named.

Then occurred one of those incidents that stagger the theory that political history is purely fortuitous. Cox and Roosevelt were the nominees of their party. It was their business to win and political campaigns are not won on unpopular issues. Both of them knew, as practical politicians, that the League was an unpopular issue, and both knew that it was possible, without repudiating it, to sidetrack the League for other issues that might win more votes. It is no wonder that they hesitated for awhile over their plans for the campaign. They were still hesitating when they went together to pay a courtesy call on the President.

It was a painful episode. Woodrow Wilson, but yesterday the greatest man in the world, sat there in a wheel-chair, old, broken, helpless. Even his exact and careful courtesy served

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only to underscore the poignancy of his ruin. A more savage commentary on the swift reversals of human fortune could not be imagined, and both of the visitors felt it with painful keenness. Finally, as they were about to leave, Cox said deferentially to the emaciated, shawled figure,

"Mr. President, I have always admired your fight for the League of Nations."

The effect was as startling as when from the gray ashes of a dying fire one last sword-blade of flame shoots up for a moment. The bent head rose, the dull eyes flashed, age and illness momentarily fell away and the amazed visitors stared once more at the eagle face of Woodrow Wilson in his days of greatness. Even his voice rang with some faint echo of its clarion note in the old times.

"Mr. Cox, the fight can still be won," he said.

Roosevelt avers that Cox's eyes filled with tears, but if he made a reply it is not recorded. As they left, though, the candidates looked at each other and each read his own thoughts in his companion's eyes.

"Roosevelt," said Cox, "we'll make the fight on the League!"

They did it, and they lost. From the standpoint of practical politics, it was a bad decision; some of their party associates thought it a mad decision, and were not hesitant about saying so. Yet the chances are that it did not determine the result. It is, to say the least, highly probable that the fight would have been lost, no matter what issue they had chosen to present. The country was already stampeding, and probably nothing could have stopped its wild rush—"back to

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normalcy," back to a Harding in the White House, a Fall in the Cabinet, back to the Ohio Gang and a saturnalia of corruption, back to Teapot Dome, and furtive figures out of the shadowy half-world flitting about Washington with little black bags filled with currency, back to scandal and cynicism and the national shame of a former officer of the Cabinet behind the bars of a prison cell.

But Roosevelt had fought for the League, knowing that he was whipped, knowing it was bad politics, knowing that it was futile, but also knowing in the bottom of his heart that it was right to do so. It was a long time before he received any reward. But twenty-two years later, with the horror released upon the world again, the very horror that Wilson foretold and tried to guard against, the man who fought for the League when it was political suicide to do so can face a nation that knows he did what he could to prevent it before, and with reason ask it to believe that he will do all he can to stop it now.



## CHAPTER IV

IT WAS in 1921 that Fortune suddenly turned upon her favorite with a savagery as appalling as it was inexplicable. At Campobello in the summer of that year Roosevelt was stricken with an illness that proved to be poliomyelitis, the dreaded infantile paralysis. Before the infection was checked both his legs were paralyzed and his arms less seriously, but still badly, affected. It was by a chillingly narrow margin that his life was saved.

Twenty years ago the usual treatment of infantile paralysis, after the stage of acute infection, was almost exactly the reverse of what it is today, and the results, in general, were bad. Based on the medical experience of the time it was not an unreasonable prediction, in 1921, that Roosevelt would spend the rest of his life as a helpless invalid, confined to a wheelchair if, indeed, he could leave his bed. Some victims, to be sure, had recovered partial use of paralyzed limbs, but these were usually children, able to withstand a regimen that was not only terrific but that dragged through many years. Children were carried through the ordeal by the determination of parents or other persons in authority; not many adults possessed the combination of courage and inexhaustible pa-

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tience that was required, so not many adults made anything like satisfactory recoveries.

Knowing this, most of his political associates, when they heard the news, simply wrote off Roosevelt as a total loss. What an end to a promising career! they exclaimed, sighed, perhaps, and considered the chapter closed.

But one did more than sigh. One was frantic with grief. He was a former newspaper reporter who had been fascinated by Roosevelt during the Sheehan fight at Albany, and whom Roosevelt had taken to Washington and given a job in the Navy Department, where he proved to be an extremely valuable man. He had remained there during the first few months of the Harding Administration, but then had made an attractive business connection. He resigned from the government service and came to Campobello for a short vacation before assuming his new post. He was on the island when the illness developed. His name was Louis McHenry Howe.

The moment the nature of the case was known, Howe threw away his new job by telegraph, and set himself the task of becoming the arms and legs of the sick man. He never held any other job; he died fifteen years later still in the service of Roosevelt.

There were many people who didn't like Howe. There were those who asserted that this little, gnarled, wizened man played the Gray Cardinal to Roosevelt's Richelieu, and who laid on him the blame for everything that went wrong and for everything they disliked about the Administration. He had his faults, without doubt, but there was a touch of genuine greatness in Louis Howe. Plenty of men are only too will-

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ing to attach their fortunes to a star that is rising in the political firmament; but it takes a great man to attach himself to a leader at the moment of that leader's apparent ruin. It is pleasant to remember that his loyalty was gloriously justified in the end; when Louis Howe died, his home was the White House, and his chief was President of the United States.

But there was no hint of this in any mind other than Howe's in the dark days of 1921. Catastrophe is all the more bitter when it falls just as life seems to be broadening out in new and pleasant reaches. This was the case with Roosevelt. After the defeat of 1920, there was not much in politics for any leader of the Democratic party, so Roosevelt turned to business.

The way was opened by a friendship he had formed with that strange, restless genius Van Lear Black, of Baltimore, technically a banker, but actually more much than that. He was a wizard at reviving and rejuvenating moribund enterprises and in 1920 he had on his hands two of great magnitude; one was a newspaper, the Baltimore *Sun*, the other a surety and investment house, the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland. Mr. Black always maintained that he never knew how to run either a newspaper or a bank; but he knew how to pick men who could. His success with the newspaper is a matter of journalistic history; what is not so well known is that the New York office of his bank began an equally spectacular ascent after he installed Franklin D. Roosevelt there as a vice president. The same critics who have tried to persuade the world that Roosevelt was no

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lawyer at all, in face of the fact that he handled a respectable practice, have also insisted that he was no banker at all, in face of the fact that he brought in a gratifying amount of new business to the company. This is not to be construed as an assertion that he was a great banker. He was not, and for the same reason that he was not a great lawyer—it wasn't really his business, not the thing he was made for. But it is an assertion that he was doing well, was enjoying the work, and had every reason to look forward to a successful business career when calamity fell upon him.

This made it all the harder to bear. When the acute stage of the illness was over, and the extent of his paralysis was known, he felt that the only honorable thing to do was to resign from the bank, which he did. But the directors, taking a more hopeful view of the case, rejected the resignation. In the end, it proved to be a wise decision on their part, for when Roosevelt finally got back to the office they discovered that being confined to his desk enabled him to get through more, rather than less, work than he had handled when he was able to run all over the place.

But this came out later. In the early fall of 1921 Louis Howe's enlisting for the duration was very nearly the only gleam of light in a prospect so gloomy that death itself could hardly have made it much darker.

It would be pointless to review in detail the events of the next seven years. All that is essential in them can be summed up in very few words. Shortly after his illness began he said to his wife, "I'll beat this thing." The greater part of the following seven years he spent making those words good.

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But while the fight itself was simply the long and bitter struggle of any victim of this malady, and therefore needs no description, certain of its effects require the most careful attention. These are not the physical effects. They were, considering the appalling amount of misinformation about poliomyelitis then current, remarkably satisfactory. The victim recovered entire use of his arms, and eventually enough of the use of his legs to walk without crutches. Incidentally, the strict regimen, including countless hours of swimming, resulted in giving him the shoulders of a professional wrestler and a constitution that carried him breezily through three Presidential campaigns—and one really hard Presidential campaign is enough to kill a horse.

Physical competence was not all he acquired, though, and not by any means the most important thing he acquired. It was this fight that made him one of us.

Consider his whole life's experience up to this point. It was American, all right, in the sense that it could not have happened just that way in any other country; but certainly it was not much like the experience of the average American. His possession of money was part of the difference, but not an especially important part. His possession of a great name was part, and his possession of friends in high places a more important part; probably more important even than that was his usual capacity to please people at the first meeting, and the most important thing of all was his possession of an extraordinary mental equipment. But the vast difference, the thing that set him miles away from the average man and woman, was none of these nor the sum of them all. It was the

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fact that in all his thirty-nine years it is impossible to find a single important shadow.

Any man of whom that may be said is a man apart from common humanity. He may be useful, he may be brilliant, he may be a dazzling genius, but he is not one of us. We don't quite understand him, and nothing will persuade us that he understands us. The average man or woman comes to that fortieth birthday with all too intimate an understanding of what is meant by the vernacular phrase "up against it." It may not have been disease, but something has come into nearly every life that is just too big to handle. Poverty, bereavement, disgrace, betrayal, failure—the cause matters little, but nearly every man at some time or other has seen his hopes blasted, his faith laid in ruins, his triumphs turned to derision, and in the presence of disaster has found his strength reduced to weakness and his pride to despair. And once a man has drunk the bitter waters of Marah, he must view as a little alien to himself one who has not.

Between 1921 and 1928 Franklin D. Roosevelt drank, and drank deep. He had never known poverty before, but any sturdy beggar is richer than a man who does not possess command over his own legs. He had never known defeat, for the race against Gerard was a mere check, and the campaign of 1920 was in some sense a triumph; but now he knew it, for now he was beaten to the ground, beaten flat and left half dead. He had little personal acquaintance with injustice, but what could be more unjust than this assault of malignant fate? He had known not much of pain, but now he learned. He had been a rejoicing athlete, and now he was a cripple.

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His companions had been the fortunate of the earth, but now he was among the earth's disinherited. He had always been accustomed to deference, as a superior man, but now he knew the fathomless bitterness of being pitied.

He came out of that fight scarred and maimed forever, but by that same token, he came back one of us.

Down at Warm Springs, in Georgia, he found a swimming pool that was wonderfully helpful. Some newspaper man heard of it and wrote an article about it, which irritated Roosevelt at first; but the publicity given the place brought victims of infantile paralysis pouring in. Many of them were desperately poor, and even for those who had money there were no proper accommodations, and no adequate professional attention. Within the next few years Roosevelt sunk half his personal fortune fixing up the place. He didn't pose as a philanthropist; as a matter of fact, when Warm Springs became an endowed foundation he got some of the money back, but if he hadn't it would have been all right. He knew what these poor people were facing. He had been there, too. So to put up the money seemed to him the only decent thing to do. "One thing thou lackest," said One to a rich young man. "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor." That particular story had a sad ending; but not always has the rich young man turned and gone away sorrowful.

Roosevelt, even during these years, was far indeed from being a valetudinarian, concerned only with his fight to recover. On the contrary, he spent only a relatively small part of the year at Warm Springs. Most of the time he worked

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regularly at the bank, and in 1924 he had formed a law partnership with Basil O'Connor, to which he gave part of his time.

Nor did he retire altogether from public life, but he figured during these years not as a candidate, but as a manager. It was at this time that he devoted himself to one project that was too much even for the political genius of Roosevelt; it was the determined attempt to make Alfred E. Smith President of the United States. Ever since his first term in the State Senate Roosevelt had been a friend and admirer of Al Smith. At that time they were on opposite sides, for Al, as a Tammany man, had been made Boss Murphy's leader in the Assembly, the lower house of the Legislature, and therefore had to do everything he could to elect Sheehan. But the dirty work that was done in that fight wasn't done by Smith, and Roosevelt knew it; therefore, their collisions were purely political, not personal, and when the session ended the Senator from Dutchess had a high esteem for the leader of the Assembly. This esteem the passing years had only increased. As Smith climbed higher and higher on the political ladder with no stain on his integrity, Roosevelt's admiration for him rose in proportion; for he knew the strength of character it took to achieve such a record in such circumstances.

When the Presidential year of 1924 approached, Roosevelt was convinced that Alfred E. Smith was the one man in public life who was endowed with the honesty, the ability and the steely courage it would take to drag the national government out of the morass of corruption in which the Harding



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regime had sunk it. He always enjoyed working for a personal friend; but he reveled in it when he was convinced that working for his friend was also the finest possible public service; and he was so convinced in 1924.

But it was the year of the great Ku Klux uprising. Al Smith was a Catholic, and as against religious prejudice an unblemished record of uprightness and intelligence in public office was no defense. The battle in the Democratic National Convention was Homeric. Roosevelt was at the time still dragging himself around on crutches, but nevertheless he made the speech ending by describing Smith in Wordsworth's lines:

This is the Happy Warrior, this is he  
Whom every man in arms would wish to be,

which is now recognized as one of the few great nominating speeches in American political history. Through the sweltering days that followed as the bedlam continued through a hundred and one ballots the Smith manager did far more work than most men with two good legs. But it was of no avail. Having shattered the Democratic party beyond hope of repair, the convention at last discarded both the leading candidates, Smith and McAdoo, and conferred the worthless nomination upon the respectable ultra-conservative, John W. Davis, who was promptly disposed of by Coolidge in the election.

But, although he could not win for his man, Roosevelt did some effective work, even in that madhouse. He made personal contacts with Democratic politicians from every corner of the country, and he laid himself out to placate those from

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the regions hottest against Smith. He actually brought many of them over, in their personal views, and although they continued to vote against Roosevelt's man numbers of them went home determined to do what they could for Smith next time. Nor did Roosevelt let up. Quietly, but persistently, he strengthened his personal relations with leaders. His frequent visits to Georgia gave him an excellent opportunity for spadework in the bitterly anti-Smith South. Of course, he didn't do it all. There were many others working for Smith during those four years, but Roosevelt certainly was among the more effective ones. The result was that in 1928 the nomination was a foregone conclusion before the convention opened. Roosevelt, walking with a pair of canes by this time, nominated Al again, and the convention promptly named him.

But Smith, hitherto invincible in New York, was a hopeless candidate in the nation. Even the Solid South broke, five of its States voting Republican for the first time in a generation rather than take Smith, and only Massachusetts and Rhode Island in the rest of the nation stuck to him. It was the most emphatic repudiation since Taft, in 1912, had carried only two States.

But in the meantime Roosevelt had been drawn again into the spotlight in highly unusual circumstances. It was soon apparent that Smith's was to be a desperate fight. Above all, he would need the immense electoral vote of New York, and New York, it was plain, was worse than doubtful. What could be done to strengthen the candidate's chances there?

The obvious move was to nominate a State ticket so strong that it would help the national ticket, rather than be a drag

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upon it. Roosevelt, after the National Convention, had gone back to Warm Springs. The doctors held out hopes that if he would spend several months there, continuously, he might hope to walk without artificial aids of any kind. After seven years of struggle, the goal was in sight, or seemed to be. Whether the doctors were right must remain forever in the realm of conjecture, for Roosevelt didn't stay the prescribed length of time. A conference of Smith leaders in New York decided that he, and he alone, as candidate for Governor would help Smith, as candidate for President in New York State.

There was some wild telephoning to Georgia that night. Roosevelt, who knew very well what was in the wind, at first kept out of the way; but at last they got to him, and Al Smith himself explained the situation and asked him to run.

This much is undisputed fact.

As to what motivated the various parties to the transaction, there are various conjectures. Some of Roosevelt's enemies have construed the affair in the most unfavorable light. They assert that it was all a Machiavellian scheme on Roosevelt's part, that he was really consumed with ambition to be nominated and only kept out of the way to make it appear that he was drafted.

Maybe he did, but this is certainly not the only explanation. It may be incomprehensible to a certain type of politician, but reasonable people have no difficulty in imagining that a man might actually prefer to recover the full use of his legs rather than be Governor of New York. Even unreasonable people ought to be able to imagine that one would

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rather recover than fight a very doubtful campaign for that position.

However, reasonable people can also understand that if a man, who was also a patriot, honestly believed that the election of Al Smith to the Presidency was greatly to be desired, and that the sacrifice of part of his bodily strength might contribute to that result, that man could not refuse and retain his self-respect. Roosevelt's reluctance to run, and his final consent can be explained on honorable grounds with the utmost ease. To explain them on any other grounds, it is necessary to assume that he is more devious than Aaron Burr, which is not easy.

Yet the ultimate outcome was embarrassing all around. He ran. He also carried New York State by 25,000 majority while Al Smith was losing it by 100,000. In other words, he showed up the man he was trying to help as a worse candidate than he was himself. In politics, such things are hard to forgive. This one was never forgiven.

## CHAPTER V

**F**RANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT was inaugurated Governor of New York on January 1, 1929, under two curious circumstances which were, in some respects, handicaps. In the first place, he had committed the offense of out-running Al Smith in Smith's own bailiwick. It was an inadvertence, but it did him no good with the strong partisans of Smith, among whom were many of the ablest politicians in the State. In the second place, he had to take over the office after six years of the ablest administration New York State had enjoyed within living memory, barring the period between 1918 and 1920, when Smith had also been Governor.

This was, of course, an advantage, as well as a handicap. Smith handed over to his successor administrative machinery developed to a high point of efficiency and remarkably free from either corrupt or incompetent elements. Roosevelt was not faced, as Smith had been, with a staggering job of house-cleaning; nor was he faced, as Smith had been, with the exacting and exasperating task of determining, by trial and error, which among the Democratic aspirants for office could do the work, and which were unfit. Smith had done that for him, to a large extent. All this tended to his benefit, relieving

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him of much of the worst part of an incoming Governor's job.

But if Smith had done the drudgery, he had also improved the opportunities of the office. In the early days of 1929 the State of New York was in very good shape indeed. All the flagrant abuses in the State government had been abated, all the more noisome cesspools cleaned out by Smith. He had been a fine Governor, and a spectacular one; this was excellent for the State, but it left his successor with few opportunities for conspicuous reform. Merely to continue the admirable policies of Governor Smith was plainly the duty of Governor Roosevelt; but while it might gain for him the approval of his own conscience, it could not be expected to arouse any delirious popular enthusiasm.

There was, of course, plenty of work still to be done. Even Al Smith couldn't accomplish everything in six years. But what remained was complicated, long-range stuff, important enough, but of the sort that made dull reading in the newspapers. There was the power policy, for example. Smith had started it with a series of roaring battles against utility corporations. He had won the battles, and immense public applause, but the State's position was still only half-consolidated when he left office. It was Roosevelt's job to go ahead working out long negotiations, involving a terrific array of statistics and endless dull legal documents, but rarely including any clash of personalities such as the public could understand. It was work of great significance, but of little dramatic value.

There was also the perennial problem of agriculture. Smith had not done a great deal about it—no great disparagement of the man, certainly, since relief of the farmer is a

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problem that has baffled every ruler in every land certainly as far back as Constantine the Great. But Smith was wholly a product of the city, whereas Roosevelt was a farmer himself and could hardly escape a keener sense of responsibility for the well-being of the rural population than Smith felt. There is nothing more important in the field of legislation than the farm problem, since it lies at the very foundation of the nation; but there is nothing in which it is more difficult to accomplish reforms that will fire the imagination of the public. This was another matter offering ample opportunities to the statesman, but few, if any, to the politician. Resembling it in this respect were the administration of justice, poor relief and a dozen other governmental problems requiring attention but not to be solved by swift and spectacular methods.

In other words, Smith bequeathed to his successor ample opportunity to be a useful and valuable Governor, but almost none to be a brilliant politician—or so it seemed in the early months of 1929.

All this time, of course, the thunder was muttering below the horizon, and the weather-wise were becoming increasingly anxious. But these were not numerous, nor influential. Their predictions of the hurricane that was brewing were commonly regarded as nonsensical, or unpatriotic, or both. The mood of the country was that of Browning's lover who wished to "ride, ride together, forever ride."

Perhaps the new Governor had his moments of uneasiness as he took office, but he gave them no expression. An inaugural address is hardly the place to indulge in calamity howling, no matter how pessimistic one may be; and the chances are,

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in fact, that Roosevelt had no more adequate a conception of the magnitude of the disaster that was impending than had other intelligent men. He knew that, if things continued in the direction they were taking in January, 1929, a crash was inevitable; but everyone who stopped to think knew that much. The new Governor seemed to have every prospect of a serene, relatively uneventful administration, attended by no more than the usual worries inseparable from the position.

His readiness to accept this illusion is evidenced by the character of the recommendations he made to the Legislature. It was a long-scale program, for the most part. There were a few small projects, largely odds and ends of unfinished business from the Smith regime, that could be disposed of immediately, but the major items comprised such matters as reformation of the State's tax system, reformation of the governmental organization of sub-divisions—counties, towns and cities—a whole system of subsidiary roads, a completely new approach to the production and distribution of hydroelectric power, and a farm program that did not stop with subsidies, direct or indirect, but that dug far down into the roots of the problem. Hardly a single major item in the whole program could be worked out in terms of months, and most of them obviously would take years.

His critics have frequently asserted that all Roosevelt did as Governor of New York was to continue Al Smith's policies. It is not true. But it is true that Governor Roosevelt owed his opportunity to Governor Smith in a much larger sense than merely the fact that Smith insisted that Roosevelt accept the nomination. Smith had also cleared his successor's way on



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the administrative side. Roosevelt would have had to spend most of his time cleaning out flagrant abuses if Smith had not done that work for him; as it was, he was able to apply his energies to a wider, and deeper, and longer program than Smith had ever evolved. It was a Smith program in the sense that it was in fields that Smith had invaded; but it was very different from the sort of work he had done at Albany.

As an example of the difference, consider the two men's approaches to the farm problem. The statement that Governor Smith had not done much about it is not to be construed as an assertion that he had done nothing. To begin with, there are certain phases of agriculture in which every intelligent city man is directly and keenly interested—milk production, for example. Smith had not overlooked this, nor the farmer's handicaps in poor marketing facilities, nor the inordinate spread between prices on the farm and prices in the retail markets.

But the Governor of New York is, in his official capacity, something of a split personality. To begin with, he is Governor of part of the largest city in the world—New Jersey and Connecticut sharing it—and of at least half a dozen other cities of more than 100,000 population. So spectacular, so dominant over the imagination is a metropolis, that many people never think of anything else in connection with the Governorship of New York. But that official is also Governor of an enormous domain, comprising 47,000 square miles with 175,000 farms and a population of three or four millions living in villages and in the open country. The interests of farm and city no doubt are parallel, but they are certainly not

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identical, and they call for incessant adjustment. Theoretically, the Governor should maintain an exactly equivalent interest in each; but as a matter of fact, no man ever did so and it is highly improbable that any man ever will.

To say that Al Smith wasn't interested in rural New York would be a gross error; but to say that he had no intimate acquaintance with its problems is to state the obvious. He was, therefore, perhaps wise in confining his attention largely to details in which plain inequities were susceptible of reasonably prompt remedy.

But the Governor who followed him had a different experience. He was a native of rural New York, and although he had lived in the city, as soon as circumstances permitted he began to spend more and more time in the country. He owned a farm, and was acquainted with farm problems by personal experience, as well as by contact with farming neighbors. He had more than that. Circumstances had saddled him with another farm in a region climatically, geologically and socially vastly different from Dutchess County, New York. It is probable that farming in western Georgia taught Roosevelt things about farming on the banks of the Hudson River that he would never have learned at Hyde Park. Indeed, he would have been strangely impervious to ideas if experience in two such widely different areas had not led him to make some effort to differentiate between what is basic and what is superficial in the complex that we refer to as the farm problem.

At any rate, he went into the Governorship realizing keenly that the solution of the farmer's difficulties is not to be ac-

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complished merely by rearranging marketing facilities and lowering taxes, although he admitted the desirability of both. Here is his own idea of the order of importance of the problems involved, as stated in a speech at the State College of Agriculture, February 14, 1930: "The first reason for the decline of agriculture is the economic one. We have come to realize that many thousands of acres in this State have been cultivated at a loss, acres which are not under modern conditions suitable for agriculture. Second, we have used many thousands of acres of soil for growing crops unsuited to the particular soil. Third, we have allowed thoroughly antiquated marketing processes to continue without intelligent change to meet the economic growth of the cities. For instance, we have built up a marvelous system of State highways, without providing either the feeders to those roads at one end or the market facilities at the other. Finally, we have only just begun to reorganize the tax burden so as to eliminate its inequalities."

This excited no unusual interest at the time. The Governor had said it, or something very much like it, before, and he was to repeat it again. To most people it seemed to be just one of those things that politicians say without conveying, or intending to convey, any intimation of serious and far-reaching action. But that was a dozen years ago. Today, when we are confronted with the massive fact of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, that passage takes on a new and large significance. The declarations, taken by themselves, are not especially impressive; their order is the thing to study. Each declaration, standing alone, is only a

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repetition of what everybody knows—or everybody who has given the subject any serious attention.

But Roosevelt began with the item that most politicians put last, misuse of land, and ended with taxes, which the ordinary politician would put first. Roosevelt had the audacity to assert that the solution of the farm problem must begin on the farm and end in the State House, instead of the other way about. His formula was, reform the farm and then reform the government. The plain implication is that if the farm is reformed, reformation of the government may safely be postponed.

The order in which he set out his points repays study because it reveals the essential structure of one of the largest, one of the most important, one of the most heavily attacked and one of the most stoutly defended of the New Deal agencies. It was following this line of thought that led Roosevelt to the creation of the Triple A.

No defense of that organization will be undertaken here, only an examination of its philosophical basis. This is not difficult, since two of the influences that certainly helped shape the Governor's thinking on this point are plainly apparent. One of these was his study of the New York "milk-shed," which had been created in 1927, before he took office. The other was his familiarity with Georgia, not from the standpoint of a mere visitor, but from that of a man trying to make a Georgia farm into a paying proposition.

The milk-shed—a rather repellant coinage, based on analogy with watershed—owed its development to the necessity of protecting the purity of the milk supply in New York City.

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To be effective, inspection had to go all the way back to the farms on which the milk was produced. This set physical limits to the area from which milk could be drawn, for it is obviously impossible for the New York Health Department inspectors to cover the entire country. In 1927, therefore, the sale of milk was forbidden in New York unless it was produced on farms within a reasonable distance of the city—"reasonable distance" being construed as the distance which it was practicable for the inspectors to go.

This was primarily a health measure, but to Roosevelt it seemed an obviously sound economic measure, too. Why should milk be hauled from Wisconsin, half-way across the continent, to be sold in New York City, when it was easily possible for enough milk to be produced within a relatively short distance of the city? The argument that not enough milk was being produced within the New York area because the land was being employed for other purposes seemed to him evidence that the land was being misused, although it might be carefully and intelligently tilled.

What was true of milk might plainly be applied to other farm products. New York is a great apple-growing State, yet vast quantities of apples from the Hood River Valley, in Oregon, are sold in the city every year. Unnecessary transportation is certainly an economic waste; using land to produce things that must be hauled long distances to market, when the same land might produce articles for which there is a demand close by contributes to that waste and, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, constitutes misuse of

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land. In other words, misuse of land is not confined to bad husbandry.

Another and more blatant form of misuse he had observed all around him at Warm Springs. Agriculture in the South is in far worse shape than it is in the Hudson Valley. Only sixty miles or so from Warm Springs is Stewart County, Georgia, cited in all the textbooks as perhaps the country's most appalling example of erosion; and people struggling hopelessly to make a living on submarginal land are to be found everywhere. The passer-by all too frequently attributes this entirely to incompetent farming; but the man who has handled land in Georgia knows better. Incompetent farming there is, and its results are murderous to the soil; but behind the incompetence there is a long chain of circumstance, over which the farmers have no control and for which they bear little, if any responsibility.

No doubt Roosevelt would have known this had he never set foot in Georgia. Thousands of Americans who have never lived on a farm in Georgia or anywhere else know it, simply as a part of the information about the country casually acquired by every intelligent man. But intellectual apprehension of a fact is only the first step toward incorporating it into one's experience of life. A man who has owned twelve hundred acres of Georgia land and tried to raise crops on it for several years, knows the facts about Southern agriculture in a way in which they can never be known by a man who learned them by reading a book.

When Roosevelt became Governor of New York nobody could tell him that all the farmers of Georgia needed was a

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combination of co-operative marketing agreements, an adequate supply of capital and reasonable interest rates, and some relief from the burden of taxation. He knew, beyond peradventure, that the first great curse of Georgia agriculture was the misuse, frequently running to complete destruction, of its fertile soils; and these other things were desirable only to the extent that they might contribute to the correction of the basic trouble. Nor did it require any long observation or profound thinking on his part to reach the conclusion that, in a somewhat different and much less obvious way the agriculture of New York was suffering from a similar condition.

Up to this point it is hard to see why anyone should not follow. It is at this point that the future creator of the AAA shows up; for while all students agree that the main trouble with American agriculture lies in misuse of land, varying in form from literal destruction of the soil itself, to the waste of skill and intelligence in producing abundant crops of the wrong sort, not all agree on what should be done about it. Perhaps there are a few who are cynical enough to hold that nothing can be done about it and, therefore, that nothing should be attempted. The great mass of Americans, however, agree that to strive to defend and improve the state of its agriculture is only elementary prudence on the part of any government, and that for the government of a country dependent for its food upon its own fields to pursue any other policy would be suicidal.

Yet among those who agree on the necessity of governmental care for agriculture there is a profound division, not

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only as to details of the country's farm policy, but also as to the very objectives to be sought. Indeed, it is the difference as to the objectives that gives rise to most of the difference as to policies. The sustention of agriculture is a conservation policy, but there are various things to be conserved. The basic wealth of the nation is only one; there is also the traditional American way of life, with its emphasis upon individual liberty to be considered.

To make a frontal attack upon the basic trouble necessarily meant the carrying through of a complex and difficult program. As Governor of a single State Roosevelt could do nothing effective along this line, and he did not try. Revision, in any thorough-going fashion, of the agricultural policy of one State would accomplish nothing while forty-seven other States were free to undo all the work done in the one. The Rooseveltian State program therefore was confined largely to the items that the Governor listed as third and fourth in importance, marketing and tax reforms. Nevertheless, not once, but repeatedly, he stressed the fact that he knew these were only palliatives in the absence of a program directed against misuse of the land. As soon as he reached a position where he could influence, not a single State, but the entire nation, he launched an attack on the basic problem.

As to the advisability of this procedure there may be honest differences of opinion. The procedure of the Triple A has become enormously complex—indeed, it had to be complex to accomplish its purpose—but its aim is simply prevention of the misuse of land. Quotas, crop loans, crop insurance, parity prices, soil conservation, all the complicated maneu-



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vers that they who sit in the seat of the scornful bitingly described as "plowing under the pigs," were directed to this end. That accomplishment of the end is desirable no one denies. That the government should seek to accomplish it few will deny. The quarrel is over whether it should be sought directly or indirectly. Should the government try to bring about better use of the land, or, by supplying palliatives, carry the farmers along in the hope that they will make their own readjustments of the use of land? Roosevelt, as President, went for the direct method on the theory that the government had been trying palliatives for generations and seeing agriculture proceed steadily from bad to worse. He may have been wrong. There is no denying that the method he chose is difficult and expensive; but there certainly is nothing in it that is alien to American ways of thinking. On the contrary, George Washington himself was one of the most ardent soil conservationists the country ever produced; and Patrick Henry, soon after the Revolution, went on record with the assertion that "He is the greatest patriot who stops the most gullies." The AAA has stopped more gullies than any other organization in our history. It is legitimate to argue that it stopped them too expensively; but it is not legitimate to argue that its work is irreconcilable with the Americanism of such men as Washington and Henry.

Another forecast of the New Deal may be found in Roosevelt's messages urging upon the New York Legislature measures intended to bring electric power to farm homes. Al Smith had fought a resounding battle with power interests in the State, but his efforts were concerned largely with

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securing rate concessions, in which he was conspicuously successful. Roosevelt endeavored to secure both the people's title to waterpower and a wider distribution of electricity through systems publicly owned, or at least so closely regulated that no extortionate rates could be levied. In this he was less successful, partly because the Republicans held the Legislature, but largely because the distribution of electric power is also an interstate problem. But the same ideas were to flower in such things as the Tennessee Valley Authority and countless rural electrification projects in later years.

However, the new Governor had no long period in which to work out, in relative peace and quiet, his theories regarding the development of the State. He had, in fact, the months between January and October, for in October, 1929, the storm burst. After the great stock-market panic of that month, all men's minds were occupied more and more with the problem of bare salvation of the economic system. For the first months the Governor of New York, like the rest of the country, seems to have been determined to cling to hope as long as there remained a shred of hope to which a rational man could cling. True, one does not find in his papers and speeches any of those fatuous predictions of the swift return of prosperity to which many ordinarily sensible men gave utterance in those feverish days; but, on the other hand, he gave the public no hint of the magnitude and duration of the catastrophe. It may be argued, of course, that he kept silent because his position compelled him to hold his tongue. With the country already terrified, adoption of the role of Cassandra by the Governor of New York would have been an

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impropriety falling little short of a crime. But it is much more probable that he didn't tell the world what was ahead because he didn't know.

But he spent four years learning. The office of the Governor at Albany is an excellent post of observation for a man how wishes really to know what is going on in the country—better, in some respects, than Washington itself. The State is so vast in population, in wealth, and in political influence that its weight is felt even by the national administration. It is usually desirable, and frequently necessary to keep the Governor of New York informed of plans of national scope. Then the man at Albany has at his command a larger secretariat and more and richer sources of information than are possessed by many State officials. If there is anything he really wants to know, it is pretty hard to keep him from finding out. At the same time, his responsibility is limited, especially if the administration at Washington does not belong to his own party, as was the case when Roosevelt was Governor. This detachment enables the New Yorker to study national problems with an objectivity beyond the reach of the harried men who are trying to deal with them.

As the months lengthened into years, and conditions proceeded from bad to worse, the observer in Albany became more and more strongly convinced not merely that the methods being employed at Washington were hopelessly inadequate to deal with the situation, but that the whole approach was wrong. Indeed, in not a few instances, it was the wrong angle of approach that accounted for the inadequacy of the methods. It was not in patriotism that Herbert Hoover was

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failing, not in courage, not in industry. It was in imagination. Mr. Hoover was a patriotic man, a brave man and a hard-working man, but, in his thinking, authoritarian to the bone. The economic faith as it was delivered unto the saints he would contend for at any cost; he wove all the spells and recited all the incantations guaranteed as sovereign remedies by the sages, and when they failed, and failed, and failed again, he could not bring himself even to consider seriously the hypothesis that the fault might lie in the spells and incantations themselves. But the possibility did not escape the attention of the observer in a somewhat cooler spot; and the longer Roosevelt considered it the stronger grew his conviction that Hoover was failing because he was trying to do the wrong thing.

At the same time, Roosevelt at Albany was failing, too. In some relatively minor matters he did pretty well, even though he had to contend with a Legislature that belonged to the opposition; but in everything really fundamental he found himself checked before he could make much more than a start. The barrier into which he was continually running was the State line, which may be an imaginary boundary on the face of the earth, but is a very solid and substantial one indeed, as regards the power of a Governor. Agriculture, for example, might be assisted somewhat by better marketing facilities and better roads, but its fundamental difficulty was the misuse of land in its many forms. About this, the Governor of a single State could do little, because he was at the mercy of the other States. If New York undertook to lay restrictions on the use of land, no matter how wise, their effect

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might be counteracted by any one of forty-seven other commonwealths. New York could lay restrictions, under the Constitution of the United States, on its own people only. There were a few exceptions, most of them related to matters directly affecting public health, such as protection of the milk supply. But in general legislation undertaking to correct the misuse of land was severely restricted in scope by the Federal authority.

Nevertheless, in his first two years Roosevelt contrived to give the State a conspicuously good administration. In this he was both handicapped and helped by the financial crash. It handicapped him in that it complicated his problems enormously and forced him into paths he had not expected nor intended to follow; but it helped him in that it had a sobering effect on the opposition. The Republicans held a majority in the Legislature, and occasionally it vetoed the Governor's ideas; but as the economic position of the country grew steadily more serious, mere factious opposition assumed an uglier and uglier look in the eyes of the public. Roosevelt had some of that sort of opposition to contend with, but sniping at the Governor's legislative ideas merely because he was a Democrat was much less popular than it had been in Al Smith's time, when all was serene in the market-place, so that playing politics with economic measures was much less dangerous.

When he came up for re-election in 1930, therefore, he had in his favor three powerful elements, first, the fact that he had given the State an administration that the independent voters considered unusually good, second, his own skill as a

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campaigner, which had improved with experience, and third—probably most important of all—the fact that the general discontent with the Republican administration at Washington made it a Democratic year. This factor was not, however, as strong as it became two years later. In 1930 it was not strong enough to unseat a single one of the twenty Republican Congressmen from New York. It was not strong enough to give the Democrats control of the Legislature. It was not strong enough to shake Republican control of many of the up-State counties and municipalities.

As far as the Governorship was concerned, however, the election of 1930 wasn't a battle, it was a massacre. Charles H. Tuttle, the Republican candidate, was not an inspiring leader, but at that he was a better man than many whom the Republicans had elected easily. On this occasion, though, when the ballots were counted they revealed the stunning fact that if New York City had been eliminated entirely, still the Democrat would have won overwhelmingly. He had carried forty-one of the fifty-seven counties outside of the city. He came down to the city, as the politicians say, with a majority of 167,000, won in the traditionally Republican territory of the upper State. In 1922 Al Smith had astounded the political world by carrying New York for Governor by a majority of 385,945; when the tremendous Democratic majority of the city in 1930 was added, it was revealed that Roosevelt had carried the State by 725,001!

This vote changed the man's status entirely. It re-elected him Governor of New York, but that wasn't half of it. It also made him at once the leading Democratic possibility for the

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Presidential nomination. New York has forty-seven electoral votes, nearly one fifth of the two hundred and sixty-six necessary to elect a President. Any Democrat who has demonstrated his ability to carry New York by that demonstration becomes a man to be considered by the party chieftains; a Democrat who can carry it by a majority nearly twice as big as Al Smith's best, a majority unprecedented in all history, is not merely to be considered, but he is to be considered first. On the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1928, Roosevelt became a Democratic Presidential possibility; on the corresponding date in 1930 he became the leading candidate.

It is necessary to keep this constantly in mind, if one is to have any adequate comprehension of the events of the next two years. Roosevelt had been a candidate since 1928. This would have been inevitable, whether he wished to run or not; but he did wish to run. The moment he became Governor, his name went on the list, and he did not regret it; but at that time, and for the two years following he was only one of a dozen. However, the moment the prodigious nature of his victory in 1930 became known, he moved to the position of the leading candidate. This altered his status in important respects and to a marked degree.

A candidate for a Presidential nomination who is one of a dozen all of whom are on something like the same footing has only one main problem, which is to increase as far as possible and as rapidly as possible the number of convention delegates pledged to him. But when one shoots out in front, and is plainly leading all the rest, he is instantly confronted with

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the additional problem of fighting off raids. All the others know that if one gets too far ahead, the race will be over before the convention meets; it therefore becomes very much to their interest to drag down the leading man, if possible. It is the leader against the field.

More than that, the opposing party is well aware that if the leading candidate can be crippled, the convention may be thrown into confusion. Perhaps such a battle may be precipitated as that of 1924 in the Democratic convention—a battle which to all practical purposes made a present of the election to the Republicans.

It was thus inevitable that a "Stop Roosevelt!" movement should develop very soon after the election of 1930. Its prime movers were supporters of other Democratic candidates, but it had, of course, the enthusiastic support of the Republicans, and especially of the Republican members of the New York Legislature. The history of the years from 1930 to 1932 is wholly unintelligible, unless this situation is kept in mind; yet it is one of the conventions of politics that no one shall mention it in public. Conventionally, everyone is held to be the purest of patriots, with no thought in mind save the good of the country; and if it becomes possible to show that the leading candidate stole a sheep on March 25, 1912, he who makes the revelation covers the wild delight in his heart with a show of sorrowful indignation that such things could be.

Nor is it regarded as seemly for the leading candidate himself to avow his ambition too frankly. Above all, he must keep strictly to himself any conviction he may have that the other candidates comprise the choicest collection of pirates ever



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assembled since Stede Bonnet and his thirty companions were hanged on Charleston sea-wall. He must cut their political throats, if he can, but he must do it with the utmost politeness, or he will not be able to command the support of their followers in the general election.

The political history of New York during the second Roosevelt administration was devoted largely to one of the most intricate and skillful games of cutthroat ever played in the United States. It was not edifying, from the standpoint of a moral philosopher, but it was absorbingly interesting to every student of politics. Naturally, no such admission ever was, or ever will be made in the political campaign books of either side. To hear the Democrats tell it, their leader was a saint robed in immaculate white, who by the imponderable power of righteousness alone quelled the fiends who raged against him. To hear the Republicans—and, later, some disgruntled Democrats as well—tell it, it was an appalling exhibition of the power of evil staged by a man who combined the cynicism of Machiavelli, the faithlessness of Talleyrand, the suavity of Aaron Burr and the luck of the devil.

Of course it was neither. It was simply an unusually hard game of politics—hard, because the stakes were immense—played by masters on both sides. If Franklin D. Roosevelt had been an immaculate saint, he never would have won that game. But he is no saint. He did win it. The fact will hardly serve as a passport when he confronts Saint Peter, but it is the best sort of evidence of his political skill.

In view of the fact that there were superb tacticians on both sides, it hardly need be emphasized that the maneuvers

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were complicated in the extreme. Thrust, parry and counter-thrust came so fast and so continuously that the public was hopelessly bewildered, and even expert observers did not know exactly what was going on half the time. Ernest K. Lindley has a carefully documented account of the affair in his biography of Roosevelt, but even today it must be read with close attention if it is to be understood.

Yet the grand strategy was simplicity itself. The fabulous decade following the war, the incredible Twenties that plunged the whole country into every form of excess, financial, industrial, social, moral and political, had culminated in New York City with the installation of a municipal government whose corruption was almost as fabulous as the decade itself. After the crash, when the sobering-up process started, even New York was appalled by the revelations that came thick and fast.

The strategy of the opposition—the Republicans actively engaged, of course, but with plenty of secret support from Democratic friends of other candidates—was to hang this mess around Roosevelt's neck. His strategy was to duck.

On the part of the opposition the effort was insincere, because Roosevelt had had no part in creating the civic cess-pool over which Jimmy Walker, as Mayor, was blithely and unconcernedly presiding. But on the other hand, neither was his part that of a Galahad, for he knew that he was going to need the support of the city organization in the campaign of 1932. He could have cleaned out the crooks much more rapidly than he did; but he was well aware that the loud demands for his intervention as Governor were based, at best,

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only in part on an honest interest in good government; in large part they were based on a scarcely pious hope that he would break his own political neck in the effort. This he steadfastly declined to do.

This duel had begun long before the election of 1930, but it was after that event that the sword-play became really fast and furious. Before 1930 the opposition was hoping only to break a Democratic Governor, and Roosevelt was playing merely for political survival; but after that date the opposition was hoping to break a potential Democratic President, and Roosevelt was playing for the White House. Investigation piled upon investigation, bills upon bills, vetoes upon vetoes. The opposition strove to compel the Governor practically to take over the city government, knowing that such action on his part would outrage Tammany and its allies. To this end they exposed crook after crook and filled the air with charges. The Governor's policy was to delay action until the proof against the crook in question was so mountainous that even Tammany would have to admit that this was an excessively bad egg; then the Governor would throw him out.

It came to a head in the early part of 1932, when charges were brought against the Mayor himself, and the Governor was called upon to exercise his lawful authority to remove corrupt municipal officials. The same law that gave him this authority provided, however, that he must furnish the accused official with a copy of the charges and hear whatever defense he chose to offer. Walker demanded time to prepare his defense. It was granted with pleasure because that post-

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poned the necessity of making the final decision until after the Democratic national convention. But the Governor employed the same time to collect more and more evidence in support of the charges. The opposition cherished high hopes. It was believed that the Governor would be compelled to remove the Mayor, and it was confidently believed that Tammany would resent his removal. At last Roosevelt seemed to be in a jam from which there was no escape. He had his choice between outraging public opinion, not only in New York but throughout the country—for by this time all America was watching—or outraging Tammany.

But he did neither. At the outset of the hearings he explained that he could not cast aside all the other business of the State in order to devote his time exclusively to the case of the Mayor of New York City. It was a perfectly reasonable explanation, with the supreme merit of being true. But it enabled him to subject the luckless Walker to a psychological Chinese torture. Proceeding leisurely, in brief hearings, day after day, he brought out facts, one by one, each more damning than the last. The newspapers had ample opportunity to make the most of each as it was revealed, and the tension went up, and up, and up, day after day, week after week. Jimmy couldn't take it. On September 11 he broke, and without waiting for the conclusion of the hearings sent in his resignation as Mayor of New York. He was out, which satisfied the reformers. But he had not been thrown out by the Governor, so Tammany had no just cause to complain. Roosevelt had won the duel, and with it the Presidency.

This business is worth recalling now for two reasons. One

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is that it is an authentic part of the history of Roosevelt, although as a matter of fact, it was a side-show. Much more important things were going on at the time, but it was the battle that raged around Walker that engaged public attention, and it exhibits brilliantly one facet of Roosevelt's many-sided character—his adroitness. The second is that after September 1, 1939, the day the guns opened on the Polish frontier, Mr. Roosevelt found himself engaged in a far more desperate political game, against far more powerful and more ruthless players, than even the battle of New York. More than that, this time he isn't playing merely for himself and his party. Whether he likes it or not, and whether we like it or not, he is playing now for every man, woman and child in the United States. Since the game is completely ruthless, and since our stake in it is enormous, there is some satisfaction in knowing that at least our man is no guileless innocent who never played tough politics before. His path is infinitely more tortuous and more slippery today than it was in 1931 and 1932; but the fact that he was as sure-footed as a mountain goat then permits the hope that he may be sure-footed again.

Nevertheless, the fight with the wrecking crew was not by any means the most important work Roosevelt was doing at this time. The fight was unavoidable, but it was purely defensive, a necessary effort to prevent his candidacy's being torpedoed before it was well under way. The measures he took to promote that candidacy were less obvious, and not as spectacular, therefore they passed unnoticed in the excitement over the other affair.

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No man alive understood better than Roosevelt himself what that majority of 725,000 in the election of 1930 implied. It made him the leader, and unless he permitted himself to be overhauled and passed by some other candidate, he must inevitably be the nominee. He had, therefore, two tasks to accomplish; one was to avoid being overtaken before the convention met; the other was to prepare himself to win the election in the event that he won the nomination. In both tasks he would need expert assistance; but he realized that the two were essentially different, and that the best possible man for one would not necessarily be equally good for the other. As far as the fight in the State of New York was concerned, he was already ably served. That was for the most part a legal question, and his counsel, Samuel I. Rosenman, had it firmly in hand throughout. But Mr. Rosenman—later to be Judge Rosenman of the New York Supreme Bench—was a lawyer, not a political adviser. Louis Howe knew a great deal about State politics, but he did not pretend to be an expert on national affairs. It was obvious that the Roosevelt organization would have to be expanded.

To fill this double-headed management the Governor did what seemed, on the surface, a curious thing. For his practical politician he went to Rockland County, just south of his old Senatorial district, but on the other side of the river; and for his theorist he went to New York City. Conventionally-minded people would have chosen a Tammany brave for practical politics and an up-State man for theory, but Roosevelt knew very well indeed what he was doing. The politician was a dealer in builders' supplies named James A. Farley.

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The theorist was a Columbia University professor named Raymond Moley. In 1930 each was already a successful man in his line, but neither had a national reputation; yet the brilliance of the selections is attested by the fact that by the time the election was held each had acquired such a reputation that half the country believed that the combination was about all there was to Roosevelt.

Events were to prove that Mr. Farley did his masterly work before the convention, while Mr. Moley did his afterward. Both have written about it since. Mr. Farley has told the world with engaging candor every detail that isn't important. All he has left out is how he did it. The omission was probably inadvertent, the truth being that Jim Farley can't tell how he did it. It is true that the logic of the situation was with him, that he understood this perfectly, and snatched every shred of advantage from it. It is true that Farley's man looked like a winner, and the Democrats desperately wanted a winner. In 1928 they had reluctantly accepted a good man, but a hopeless candidate and, as a result, had "marched through a slaughter-house to an open grave." Now they meant to win. Walter Lippmann's estimate of Roosevelt as an amiable gentleman with no qualifications whatever for the Presidency they rejected; the ability to carry New York by 725,000 was an immensely important qualification in the eyes of party men.

Each of these considerations was a high card in Farley's hand; but as all men know, a blundering player may hold a handful of high cards and yet lose. This one didn't blunder. He was no novice in politics, although this was his first ap-

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pearance on the national stage. Beginning in Rockland County, he had worked up by slow steps to become secretary of the Democratic State Committee. He had attended the last four national conventions as a delegate from New York, so his personal acquaintance with Democratic leaders was extensive; it is probably true to say that at this time Jim Farley knew more people throughout the country than knew him. In any event, he knew somebody in every State in the Union; and, as events were to demonstrate, he usually knew the right man.

Of course he had known Roosevelt for years, and ever since the election of 1928 had been his political agent, if not his formal manager; but after 1930 he began to work at it seriously, vigorously and constantly. If one could tell how he did his work, however, one would have reduced the art of politics to precise formulae and it would be possible for a man to become a politician by reading a book. It is possible to trace the journeys Farley took, to name the men with whom he talked, to reproduce the arguments he presented. This was, no doubt, nine-tenths of his work; but the last tenth, the final touch that brought them over into the Roosevelt camp was—who knows what? The right word spoken at exactly the right moment, perhaps not even a word, but the right gesture, the right look, are things that cannot be catalogued, but that are nevertheless decisive. Small-fry politicians may work mechanically, in ways that can be described, but a great one is an artist, adapting his technique as swiftly, as instinctively, and as unconsciously to whatever situation confronts him as a great musician shifts his manner to con-



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form to the passing mood. Evidence of James A. Farley's calibre is the fact that his man went to the Chicago convention with 666 $\frac{1}{4}$  votes on the first ballot, with 778 necessary to win.

There is no doubt whatever that this was largely due to Farley, and to the organization that Farley built up. Roosevelt was a strong candidate, to be sure, Farley or no Farley; but he was not by any means as overwhelmingly strong in his own right as the first-ballot figures would indicate. Outside of New York State it is probable that Ritchie, Governor of Maryland, was as well known as Roosevelt. Garner, of Texas, was better known, and Smith, of New York, vastly better known. The trouble with Smith, of course, was that he was too well known. It was not that anyone questioned his honesty or his ability; it was that practically everyone, outside of New York and a few other great centers of population, questioned the possibility of electing him. The resentments of the campaign of 1928 still smouldered in all the States, and men who had been seared in that fire knew only too well that the flames of religious prejudice would burst forth instantly if Smith were nominated. Indeed, in many of the States the very party leaders would have revolted; most of them had made an honest effort to elect Smith in 1928, and not a few of them had lost their own jobs for their pains. They were flatly determined not to sacrifice themselves twice for a hopeless candidate, and they were soured by the very suggestion.

More than that, the radical wing of the party had never liked Smith's affiliations with big business in New York. He

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had appointed as his campaign manager and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee in 1928 one John J. Raskob, a multi-millionaire automobile manufacturer, and Mr. Raskob had collected under the Smith banner an array of financiers and industrialists who made strange companions indeed for the former Bryanites of the West and South. These people were convinced that Smith was shifting over to the Right, and they didn't want him on that account, regardless of all else.

Nevertheless, the candidacy of Smith was a thorny problem for Jim Farley. Smith had and held the major portion of the New York delegation, which put Farley under the necessity of beating the candidate favored by his own State. More than that, it laid his candidate open to one of the deadliest charges that can be brought in politics, the charge of ingratitude. Al Smith had, indeed, made Roosevelt Governor of New York. He had dictated the nomination not to the party, only, but also to Roosevelt himself. True, he did it to serve his own purposes, but such considerations are easily forgotten, while it was incontestably true that the man whom Al Smith had brought out was now running against Al.

The situation was full of dramatic values that delighted political reporters and gave headaches to Farley; nor was it improved any by the climax at Chicago. The convention had sat up all night taking three inconclusive ballots. Roosevelt's vote had crept up to 682 and a fraction, but he still needed 86 votes to gain the necessary two-thirds. Still, the Smith forces had not surrendered. Had not Champ Clark won a majority at the Baltimore convention in 1912, yet failed of

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the nomination? Had not Smith himself fought McAdoo through a hundred and two ballots in 1924? Had he not seen McAdoo climb to 530 votes on the sixty-ninth ballot, and yet be beaten in the end? No, Smith was conceding nothing as yet. But at the beginning of the first ballot of the second session the Smith men had to endure the bitterness of seeing the old enemy, McAdoo, climb to the platform and turn over California's 44 votes to Roosevelt, to be immediately followed by Texas, with 46 more. That did it. In their wrath and disappointment the Smith men accused Jim Farley, McAdoo and Jack Garner of every species of political villainy; and no doubt some of them believed it. That Farley made a deal is obvious; what else was he there for? He was Roosevelt's manager and of course he made a deal at the earliest possible moment. But that there was anything disreputable about it no one has ever shown. Garner was nominated for Vice President and naturally he got the Roosevelt votes. After the election, McAdoo was offered a Cabinet post, but he declined it, preferring to remain in the Senate. So far as the world knows, all he got out of the Chicago incident was the satisfaction of administering personally the blow that finished Al Smith as a Presidential candidate.

The severance of relations between two such celebrated political allies as Roosevelt and Smith naturally gave rise to recrimination and bitterness. The principals conducted themselves with decorum, at least in public, but their followers have been exchanging vituperation ever since. The more extreme charges, on both sides, are obviously false; but the basic assertions are that Roosevelt was ungrateful and Smith

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was unreasonable, and there may be a residuum of truth in both. Unquestionably a great majority of the delegates at the Democratic national convention believed sincerely that it would be extremely difficult, if at all possible, to elect Smith; and a considerable number believed that the nomination of Smith would doom the party to inevitable defeat. Smith had had his chance in 1928 and had demonstrated inability to carry even the "Solid South." His demand that he be named again therefore was unreasonable, from the standpoint of Southern and Western delegates.

On the other hand, it is elevating Roosevelt to a preposterous level of sacrificial devotion to suggest that he thought of nothing but the good of the party in contending against Smith. Roosevelt wanted to be President, and he realized that this was such an opportunity as would never come again. Without doubt, this made it easier for him to convince himself that he had paid in full whatever political debt he owed to Smith. Neither man, in this affair, played the part of a shining hero, nor was either a deep-dyed villain.

However, from Roosevelt's standpoint, and perhaps from that of Smith, too, the break came at the right time. For a break was inevitable, not on petty personalities, but because of the wide divergence of the two men's political philosophies. Without doubt Smith sensed it before the campaign of 1932. Roosevelt men who accuse the New Yorker of willingness to sacrifice the Democratic party to his own arrogance overlook this. Smith had followed Roosevelt's career as Governor with the closest attention, and he had not failed to note how Roosevelt, although he adopted the Smith policies, had car-

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ried them far beyond the point that Smith considered expedient or even desirable. Smith had fought the extortions of the power companies, but Roosevelt was contemplating, if not actually planning, their complete extermination except, perhaps, as local distributing agencies. Smith had endeavored to secure more generous treatment of the indigent poor, but Roosevelt's old-age pension law was obviously only one step in a long program of social security. Smith had favored legislation designed to give the farmers a better chance to market their products advantageously, but Roosevelt was talking of the complete rehabilitation of agriculture by governmental assistance.

This filled Al Smith with horror, and there is no reason for believing that there was any insincerity in it—no reason, that is, unless one is such an extremist as to believe that it is impossible for a conservative to be honest. Al Smith was a conservative of the school of Cleveland and Washington. Roosevelt was a liberal of the school of Wilson and Jefferson. A break between them was as inevitable as was the enmity between Hamilton and Jefferson, and for exactly the same reason—they were both patriotic, but each believed that the theories of the other would prove ruinous to the country. Smith's effort to prevent Roosevelt's nomination was not necessarily altogether selfish; Smith wanted to be President, it is true, but he also wanted to prevent the rise to that office of a man whom he had already begun to regard as dangerous.

In these circumstances the fact that the break came before the election was fortunate for both men. Nobody could ac-

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cuse Smith of having put Roosevelt in the White House. Nobody could accuse Roosevelt of owing anything more to Smith. Therefore the new President was free to disregard Smith's big business friends in making his appointments, and Smith was free, four years later, to help found the Liberty League.

James A. Farley's big job was finished when the Chicago convention adjourned. True, as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee he conducted the subsequent campaign; but it soon became apparent that a much less astute man could have handled that with ease. All Farley had to do was to let things ride. The country, in 1932, was not especially desirous of Roosevelt's election, but it was grimly determined to bring about Hoover's defeat. Long before election day it was plain that, short of perpetrating some fabulous asininity, Roosevelt simply couldn't avoid election.

Where Farley's big job ended, Raymond Moley's began. The first strong intimation the country at large had that something new had been added to American politics was the appearance upon the scene of Mr. Moley—in Germany, where they are careful about academic titles, he would be Mr. Professor Doctor Moley, for he held a chair in Columbia University and was entitled to write "Ph.D.," after his name. But in America, after the American fashion, he laid little stress upon either the professorship, or the doctorate, preferring to be known as one of the country's leading experts on crime, which he was. When this was bruited abroad, it was at first believed in wide areas that the Democratic candi-

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date had retained a sort of Sherlock Holmes, or at least an Allan Pinkerton, to attend him; and it was not understood.

It was Mr. Moley's unenviable fate, indeed, never to have his position quite clearly understood, least of all by himself. A few years later, when he published a somewhat acidulous account of his connection with the administration, it became the fashion, among the perfervid Rooseveltians, to attempt to deny that he ever had had a position of any importance in the regime. This is as grotesque a perversion of the facts as the early assumption that he was a Hairbreadth Harry, customarily accoutred with handcuffs and a dark-lantern. At Columbia Mr. Moley was Professor of Public Law (defined by Webster as "that branch of the law that regulates the mutual rights of the state and those within its jurisdiction") and he had gained the respect and esteem of Governor Roosevelt by his work as research director of the New York State Crime Commission in 1926 and 1927, and especially by the document he prepared for the Governor explaining the legal and constitutional ground for the expulsion of one of the crooked city officials. The Governor admired especially the swift competence with which Moley could unravel a complex idea, and his capacity to present his findings lucidly and yet adequately. Moley, on his side, perceived in the Governor a politician with a new form of approach to problems that had interested the professor for years.

This was the intellectual relation. The personal relation is not relevant to this discussion, but it was altogether excellent.

The absorption of Moley into the Roosevelt entourage was creditable to both men, although that fact has been violently denied. Later, when the Professor had become a sort of public

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whipping-boy, belabored by every critic of the administration, he was accused, among countless other high crimes and misdemeanors, of Machiavellian cunning and inordinate ambition. The complete refutation of that canard is the fact that in the beginning he labored long and hard without pay and without public recognition; and when his man did come to power he held an inconspicuous office and that briefly. All the evidence indicates that he enlisted for two reasons, and only two—a belief that he was performing a public service, and the fact that the work itself fascinated him.

On Roosevelt's side two inimical explanations are put forward. Enemies of Roosevelt say he enlisted Moley because he had no ideas of his own. Enemies of Moley say he was enlisted because the Governor desired a sort of superior literary secretary, a man to look up dates and statistics and perhaps do the actual typing of his speeches. Both are nonsense. On the face of the facts Roosevelt had at least one sensationally good idea, to wit, the idea of enlisting Moley. As a matter of fact, he was bursting with ideas, but many of them were only half-developed. What with attending to the affairs of the State, fending off the Republican wrecking crew, and planning the campaign with Farley he had little time to devote to developing his ideas. He therefore brought in Moley, not to type for him, but to think for him, because he knew the man could think. Later he gave him *carte blanche* to bring in anyone else who could be useful.

So Moley proceeded to organize the famous Brain Trust. About the procedure itself there was nothing new. Not since the Civil War has any man campaigned for the Presidency



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as a nominee of one of the great parties without calling in consultants of many types and, generally speaking, the abler the candidate, the more eagerly has he sought expert advice and the more weight has he given it. Nor have candidates of any party hesitated to seek advice from the colleges and universities. The president of the very university of which Moley was a member, Nicholas Murray Butler, has been the adviser of many Presidents; and no man within living memory has occupied the White House without occasionally seeking academic advice. Why not? If the colleges and universities are not conservators of information, they have no excuse for existence; and if a man seeks knowledge, he should certainly go where knowledge is supposed to be.

The novelty about this particular group was the completeness of its separation from the strictly political end of the campaign. According to the chief of the Brain Trust's own account, he sat down with Rosenman and Basil O'Connor one night to discuss the formation of a program. Note that Farley was not present, nor even Louis Howe. They were handling politics. This group was handling philosophy. Rosenman and O'Connor recited a list of the principal subjects they thought should be discussed by the candidate. As each subject was mentioned, Moley suggested the name of a man who was an expert in that line; as his acquaintance was largely in academic circles, a great many of the names were those of college professors. But that wasn't the point. The point was that these men had precise, accurate and comprehensive information which Roosevelt would need.

A great many of the men mentioned that night never served.

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Some couldn't. Some wouldn't. A few were tried out, but proved to be disappointments. One or two were themselves disappointed when they found that the candidate's views differed from their own, and walked out. In the end, the group consisted of Moley, Rosenman, O'Connor, Rexford G. Tugwell, Adolf A. Berle, Charles W. Taussig and, after the nomination, Hugh S. Johnson. Of these, Moley, Tugwell and Berle were college professors, Rosenman and O'Connor lawyers, Taussig and Johnson businessmen. The significant thing is not the preponderance of professors in the group, but the absence of politicians. But this was only the central group, the whole-time men, so to speak—although, as a matter of fact, none could give all his time to this work, for none was paid. A long list of others was consulted from time to time and many of them—Felix Frankfurter, for example, Bernard Baruch and M. L. Wilson—were exceedingly influential.

It was James Kieran, New York *Times* reporter covering the Roosevelt headquarters, who, observing the multiplicity of experts of all varieties coming and going, sardonically observed that Mr. Roosevelt seemed to be creating a "brains trust." The phrase struck the popular fancy, but "brains trust" is hard to say rapidly, so it became nationally famous as "the Brain Trust."

Few features of the Roosevelt regime have been more widely and violently denounced than the Brain Trust. Its members, during the next two or three years were pilloried as arrogant, ignorant, filled with colossal conceit, wily, brainless, sycophantic, feeble, vindictive, ruthless and puerile. Maybe they were. It is hard to see how they could have been all those

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things at once, since several of the accusations contradict each other, but maybe they were. It is a curious fact, though, that few of its critics, if any, have denounced the Brain Trust for one thing that it unquestionably did. It sold the people of the United States a bill of goods that they did not know they were buying.

The reason for this omission, no doubt, is that when the goods were delivered and the astonished people had looked them over, they liked them so well that in 1936, with an enthusiasm unparalleled in American political history, they re-ordered.

Strangely little attention has been paid to the fact that Roosevelt came to power almost exactly as Harding and McKinley did—that is to say, the people were intent, not upon electing him, but upon defeating his opponent. To adapt a much-misquoted remark of H. L. Mencken, the Democrats could have beaten Hoover with a Chinaman. Raymond Moley and the Brain Trust did not elect Roosevelt in 1932. Jim Farley and the political group did not elect him. He did not elect himself. Hoover elected him.

Mr. Moley has written, of that campaign, "The public as a whole, and careless newspaper commentators, of which there were many, did not see in perspective the speeches Roosevelt had delivered between April and October. The ideas they contained had so often been shrouded by studied generalities that their translation into action, after March 4th, was to come as something of a shock . . . Yet many of the main lines of the New Deal had already been publicly forecast."

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One must acknowledge Mr. Moley's capacity for understatement in selecting the phrase "something of a shock." It was all of that. Indeed, to many men it came as something of a combination of *blitzkrieg*, hurricane, earthquake and tidal wave. Not many months after the election the *New Yorker* was publishing a picture of a white-mustached old gentleman rising from his chair with a convulsed countenance while his anxious wife cried warningly, "Now, you *know* the doctor told you not to discuss Roosevelt!"

Yet Mr. Moley's assertion is perfectly true. Roosevelt did outline in his campaign speeches the direction his policies were to follow. Nor were they always "shrouded by studied generalities." The famous Commonwealth Club speech at San Francisco, on which not only the Brain Trust worked, but also, says Mr. Moley, John Dalton, Robert Straus, Bernard Baruch and Senator Key Pittman, not to mention the candidate himself, was as clear and unambiguous a statement of what was to come as these men could contrive. But in the uproar of a political campaign nobody paid much attention to what it implied. Really the most sensational speech of the year, and by long odds, it passed for the moment as one of the dullest. It was another illustration of the principle that the way for a political orator to fool the people is to tell them the exact, unadorned truth, for that is the one thing they are not expecting from him, and therefore the one thing they cannot believe.

The operations of the Brain Trust in that summer of 1932 are certain to have a vivid and lasting fascination for historians and philosophers. The form of the organization, be it

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repeated for emphasis, was familiar enough; every American candidate for many years had had something of the sort; but the conditions under which this one operated were unusual enough to differentiate it sharply from all its predecessors and make it in fact—as it was in popular opinion—something really new in politics.

The first of these conditions was the confidence of the candidate. The moment the nomination was won, Mr. Roosevelt was certain of his election. Nothing short of an incredibly stupid campaign could defeat him, and he knew that a campaign directed on the strictly political side by Jim Farley would not be stupid. Mr. Roosevelt was therefore unusually free of the necessity of making hampering and dangerous pledges to this faction and that in order to secure electoral votes.

But he was also keenly aware that when he took office, and he was sure he would on March 4, 1933, he would face an extremely bad situation. True, he did not guess, even on election day, how completely appalling that situation was to be. Nobody guessed it. But he knew it would be bad and that it would require prompt and definite decisions not based on politics, on his part. His advisers, therefore, were in the happy position of being able, and being required, to frame an administrative program in an atmosphere singularly free of the fogs of political anxiety and uncertainty.

Some compromising was forced upon them, of course. The Democratic party and the wider electorate to which it was appealing included Protectionists and Free Traders, Gold Bugs and Greenbackers, Isolationists and Internationalists,

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Radicals and Reactionaries. But as long as the candidate did not deliberately go out of his way to affront any of these factions, they might be held together. The compromising that the Brain Trust had to do lay in the field of omission, rather than in that of commission. Such stresses and strains as were imposed upon their consciences arose rather from what they left out of the campaign speeches than from what they wrote into them.

At the same time, the program that the candidate demanded of them was anything but a negative one. Mr. Roosevelt was keenly aware that, once in power, there was only one policy that he could under no consideration afford to follow, and that was a policy of inaction. It was the Hoover administration's lack of forthright, determined action that had brought it to grief; it was popular wrath against that failure to act that was sweeping the Democrats into office. Roosevelt knew that, in the beginning, he could count on support for anything under heaven that he chose to do, provided only that he did something. What an opportunity to frame his own program without regard to political consideration, but based solely on principles that he considered sound!

The men who composed the Brain Trust were, in the main, altogether in sympathy with Mr. Roosevelt's views, as far as they understood them. Their task was to develop them and frame them in the clearest and most persuasive language they could command. They had less need than almost any similar group in the country's history to consider the prejudices of this party leader, or the vanity of that one, or the cupidity of a third. What they had to consider was the men-

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talities of the average American. What they had to frame was a genuine appeal to the nation.

With this situation in mind, consider, now, the characters of the men who composed the Brain Trust. Omit, for the sake of argument, the debatable points and consider only those upon which everyone, including their opponents, is in agreement. Their bitterest foes have not denied that they were highly educated men, which necessarily implies intelligence of a sort. No one denies that they were all interested in ideas, and the records show that each of them had for years been a student of one phase or another of public affairs. There is no sort of evidence that any of them was avaricious, but plenty of evidence that each of them didn't mind working for nothing if the job was an interesting one. It is not granting them much to assume that they were all reasonably patriotic—at least enough so to wish to see well managed the government under which they had to live.

But if they were intellectually alert, interested in public affairs, not consumed with greed, and relatively disinterested, then it must follow that the opportunity to have a hand in framing the best possible program, with little deference to practical politics, was an opportunity that such men would embrace with joy. They did. Whether one reads Moley, or Lindley, or Rosenman, or the sourest comments of their most implacable foes, the fact emerges with a clarity beyond dispute that the Brain Trusters during the campaign of 1932 were among the happiest men in America. Oh, they suffered superficial hardships in plenty. They worked prodigiously, they worked until they dropped in their tracks. They went

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without meals, they went without sleep. They raced about the country by train, by plane, by automobile until they collapsed from physical fatigue. They struggled through tons of reports, abstracts, statistical tables, charts and graphs until they collapsed from mental fatigue. They listened to crooks and cranks and fools; they listened to platoons and companies and regiments of bores, all the champion bores in the country, until they collapsed from emotional fatigue. Nerves frayed, tempers exploded, stomachs soured, heads and backs ached. But all this was surface stuff. Underneath it was the conviction that they were doing a grand job, that they were doing it well, and that they were winning. Of course they were happy.

That happiness exuded into the campaign and the country noted it. It was a sparkling campaign, serious enough in its intent, but blithely confident in its manner. It was brisk and breezy from the very beginning, when the candidate swept aside the traditional, but absurd, notification ceremony. It was the custom, adopted long before methods of almost instantaneous communication had been perfected, for the successful candidate for a nomination officially to know nothing about what was going on for two weeks or a month after the convention. He was supposed to wait solemnly on his front porch until, in the course of time, a posse of party dignitaries approached and, in a terrific discharge of oratory, usually pretty woeful, informed him that he really was the nominee.

This time the candidate, nominated at a night session and hearing it all over the radio, boarded an airplane in New York the next morning, flew to Chicago, breezed into the



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hall before the convention had adjourned and accepted the nomination on the spot. So when he said, "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people," his actions gave support to the words. Probably nobody in the hall except the candidate, probably not even the Brain Trust, had any idea of how literally true those words were; but everyone felt that something novel had been injected into the situation.

The impression was strengthened as the campaign went on. The gaiety of the fight the public ascribed wholly to the candidate. To a large extent, this was right. Mr. Roosevelt was ever an optimist, and he was a born campaigner whom the hardships of the road stimulated, rather than oppressed. He was having a glorious time, and made no effort to conceal the fact.

But that doesn't account for all of it. The men who were advising and assisting him were having a great time, too, even if they were wearing themselves out. They were engaged in an adventure unique in American politics, and well they knew it. They were following a leader in whom they believed, and the cause they had fashioned, to a large extent, themselves. They hoped and believed they were rendering a great public service; and they knew they were modifying, perhaps reconstructing, American history. They were living fast, they were living with every faculty extended to its furthest reach. It would have been a marvel if their exhilaration had not permeated the campaign until it became perceptible to the public. It did, with the logical effect of stimulating the

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enthusiasm of their supporters and redoubling the fury of their opponents.

The campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 was one of the best campaigns in American political history, and it was the Brain Trust that made it so. Mr. Roosevelt added the glamour, and only Mr. Roosevelt could have captivated the audiences so completely; but if the reader who goes through them today finds that the speeches proceed in logical, orderly sequence, fitting neatly into a consistent, well-designed pattern, working up to a splendid climax in the Commonwealth Club address, and then ending in a shower of fireworks, that is due to the hard labor of the men who supported him. This must be acknowledged in simple justice. No matter what happened afterward, this much credit the Brain Trust richly earned.

It is true that Roosevelt could have won without the Brain Trust in 1932. It is true that any Democrat probably could have won, for it is indubitably true that the public did not pay much attention to the contents of the package that the Brain Trust so carefully wrapped up and handed over. But it is just as true that, after he won, Mr. Roosevelt would have been in a much less advantageous position without the work of this group. This lends poignancy to another phase of the situation. It is the fact that while this was going on, some members of the Brain Trust, notably Moley and Johnson, were themselves handed a package which they accepted without sufficiently careful examination. They assumed, after months of close association, that they knew Franklin D. Roosevelt's mind. They didn't. For example, Moley, a native of Ohio, was as firm an isolationist as Senator Taft him-

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self, and basically—although not superficially—as convinced a hard-money man as Old Bullion Benton in his hey-day. He thought Roosevelt was both, and when he was undeceived, he was certain that the President had changed under the pressure of evil influences and wrote bitterly about it. Johnson fell into the same error, as regards isolationism. He came from Kansas, and shared to the full the characteristic Middle Western distrust and suspicion of everything European.

There is no denying the fact that Roosevelt let them think this throughout the campaign. Perhaps he did it deliberately, and if he did it cannot be described as anything other than a dirty trick. This is the hypothesis accepted by the President's enemies, and it is tenable. However, it is not the only hypothesis that will account for the facts. The issues on which they later broke with the President did not figure in the campaign flatly and baldly. When they were touched on at all, it was in a very general way. For example, the President never believed in cancellation of the war debts. To that extent he was with Moley and Johnson. If they accepted that as proof that he was with them all the way, it is certainly not incredible that he may have accepted it as proof that they were with him all the way. The incontestable fact that Moley and Johnson were deceived in Roosevelt does not eliminate the possibility that Roosevelt was deceived in Moley and Johnson.

James A. Farley and Raymond Moley were only two of a vast number of men who played important parts in the creation of the New Deal; but they were the most prominent,

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and they are the only two who have been seriously considered as possibly the whole of it. Therefore they deserve especially careful attention. But that they were not the whole of it, or even the major part of it, is evidenced by the fact that although they are gone, and Johnson is gone, and Tugwell is gone to Puerto Rico, and Berle has long been lost in the vast wilderness of the State Department, the New Deal survives.

## CHAPTER VI

THE fogs of political controversy arising from three bitterly fought Presidential campaigns naturally have obscured the outlines of the original program; but it must be admitted that they are not the only reason for widespread misunderstanding of its actual substance. Five years after the first election of Roosevelt as President, one year after his second election, the editors of the London *Economist* wrote a book to answer the question, What is the New Deal? They had two important qualifications for the task; they were, as they said themselves, "three thousand miles away from the heat of political controversy," and they were—as they did not say, but as all the world knows—men especially trained as analysts, and having the reputation of being among the most competent in the world. They wrote a hundred and forty-three pages, but added, "the answer is still incomplete."

Four years after the appearance of that book, and a year after Roosevelt's third election, that statement is as sound as ever. To many honest men this seems to be a horrid situation. A political question that cannot be answered in a hundred and forty-three pages and eight years seems to them a monstrosity. However, it is nearly two thousand years since

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Pontius Pilate asked, "What is truth?," but the answer is still incomplete, in spite of the endeavor to answer it of all the libraries in the world.

If the New Deal really is what Roosevelt, with the assistance of the Brain Trust, said it is in the Commonwealth Club speech, then it is no wonder that people are still confused by it. In the course of that speech he said, "Our task now is not discovery or exploitation of natural resources, or necessarily producing more goods. It is the soberer, less dramatic business of administering resources and plants already in hand, of seeking to re-establish foreign markets for our surplus production, of meeting the problem of underconsumption, of adjusting production to consumption, of distributing wealth and products more equitably, of adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people."

If Adam Smith was inspired of God, then this is indubitably horrible heresy. But it isn't the Marxist heresy. It is far older than Karl Marx, at least as old as Quesnay and the Physiocrats. For the speaker added, "As I see it, the task of Government in its relation to business is to assist the development of an economic declaration of rights, an economic constitutional order. This is the common task of statesman and business man. It is the minimum requirement of a more permanently safe order of things."

The cardinal doctrine of all economists of the *laissez faire* school is that the tasks of the statesman and the business man are forever disparate. Yet if this doctrine is divinely inspired, we are all heretics, for we have not accepted it since Alexander Hamilton contrived the assumption of the State debts

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in order to rally business men to the support of the new government.

But the doctrine of the New Deal is not Hamilton's doctrine, even though it has incorporated some of Hamilton's policies in its program. The difference is a difference in attitudes, but it is important, even though it may lead to a similarity of policies. The endeavor of Hamilton was, in the words of his famous Report on the Public Credit, "To justify and preserve the confidence of the most enlightened friends of good government." That phrase, "the most enlightened friends of good government" was sardonic, as Hamilton used it. It included, to be sure, some wise, honest and patriotic men; but it also included, as Hamilton knew and privately admitted, a Falstaff's army of gamblers, speculators, swindlers and outright thieves. It included George Washington, but it also included the great merchants of Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, whose fortunes had been gained by privateering which was, in many cases, a polite name for piracy. It included the great political philosophers of Virginia, but it also included the land speculators of Virginia who, in morals and manners, graded but slightly, if at all, above the population of a second-rate penitentiary. But it included everyone who controlled economic power, and that was the point. Hamilton was speaking for a new, weak and rickety government, whose chances of survival were none too bright even in the eyes of its warmest friends. That government, in Hamilton's opinion, had to win the support of the powerful, and his policy was frankly directed to that end.

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The world now has a word for it; it was a policy of appeasement.

The policy of the New Deal—its policy, please note, not its practice; we shall come to a discussion of its practice later—is in sharp contrast: “Our task now is . . . adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people.” When he uttered those words Roosevelt was not speaking, like Hamilton, for a ramshackle political experiment, but for a government very nearly, if not quite, the most powerful upon the globe. He was speaking at a moment when the rich, including the honest men as well as the crooks, were in despair after three years of such a beating as wealth had never taken before in the history of the country. The danger in 1932 was not that the rich might arrogantly withdraw their support from the government, but that the government might not be able to protect the rich against the rising fury of the poor, who also had been taking a beating. Had he been a stupid man, Roosevelt, too, might have talked appeasement, directed toward the other end of the social scale. Many others were doing so. Huey Long, Dr. Townsend, Upton Sinclair were sounding the note of appeasement of the dispossessed at the top of their lungs; and they were to increase in lung-power for some years to come.

But the words used at San Francisco were “adapting *existing* economic organizations to the service of the people.” That was not appeasement; it was genuine negotiation.

There is an argument against this policy as a policy, without reference to the efficiency of its practice. No American is



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likely to argue that economic organizations should not serve the people, for that would be a denial of the whole theory of the republic, indeed, of all modern government. But a great many Americans believed then, and continue to believe, that economic organizations cannot be successfully adapted to the public service by the exercise of political power. Of course, no rational man makes any such assertion without admitting important exceptions. The postoffice and the mint are both economic organizations, but it would be intolerable to have them in any hands but those of the government. Most reasonable men will admit, too, that it is the duty of government to intervene when the rapacity of powerful interests increases to the point at which they begin to exercise the power of economic life or death over wide areas. Some regulation of such business enterprises as railroads, banks and public utilities is plainly necessary.

But to admit that there are times when organized society must say to economic organizations, "Thou shalt not" is to grant it no more than veto power, which is widely different from what Roosevelt proposed in the Commonwealth Club speech, and what he has continued to urge ever since. A man who rejects the theory of the New Deal on this ground is not only within the realm of reason, but has impressive historical precedents to back his position. For one thing, he has the reiterated assertion of Thomas Jefferson that the best government is the one that governs least. Whether Jefferson would repeat that assertion today is another question; but he certainly said it, and believed it, during his own lifetime.

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But the very fact that Jefferson made this statement more than once is evidence that a contrary opinion existed in this country when he was alive. Its spokesman, indeed, was none other than Hamilton. It is true that Hamilton believed in adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the government, rather than to that of the people, and this was the basis of Jefferson's objection. But Hamilton believed in the feasibility of adaptation, and he had behind him a great party that also believed in it. Therefore, while this theory of the New Deal may be wrong, it certainly isn't new, nor is it alien. A perfectly rational man may consider it nonsense; but a man who considers it Marxism, or Communism, or any other sort of foreign ideology thereby puts Hamilton, Washington and John Adams into the category of the Bolsheviki, which is flatly irrational.

"Every man has a right to life," said Roosevelt in a famous passage in the same speech, "and this means that he has also a right to make a comfortable living. He may by sloth or crime decline to exercise that right; but it may not be denied him . . .

"Every man has a right to his own property; which means a right to be assured, to the fullest extent attainable, in the safety of his savings. By no other means can men carry the burdens of those parts of life which, in the nature of things, afford no chance of labor; childhood, sickness, old age. In all thought of property, this right is paramount; all other property rights must yield to it."

This idea is the real dynamite in the Commonwealth Club

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speech. This is what has blown the old politico-economic system of the United States so high that no one, not even the Republican party in its 1940 platform, any longer talks seriously of restoring it as it existed before 1932. Yet this passage has been subjected to very little criticism.

The reason for this omission is not far to seek. So much energy has been expended in the effort to show that Roosevelt is the propagator of notions entirely alien to American tradition that it would have been working at cross-purposes to emphasize his most powerful declaration in support of capitalism.

Note carefully the wording of those two utterances, and observe how difficult it is to attack them and still adhere to traditional Americanism. "Every man has a right to life"—nobody denies that. But "this means that he has also a right to *make*"—*i.e.* to earn—a comfortable living." Will that be disputed? Yet "he may by sloth or crime decline to exercise that right." He frequently does, but there is no intimation that in case he does he should then be given a comfortable living that he has not earned. This is all good Americanism, but it is undeniable that it may be made to fit neatly into the program of Socialism, too, and perhaps into that of Communism, as well.

But "every man has a right to his own property" is the very mudsill of capitalism, on which the whole towering structure rests. No collectivist system ever devised holds that principle inviolate. But—and here is where the catch begins to appear—neither has capitalism held it inviolate. The at-

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tacks on capitalism as far as they have been effective owe that effectiveness to the possibility of showing that under capitalism some men's right to their own property has been ruthlessly and cynically denied. No capitalist will deny in words that every man has a right to his own property; but many do deny it in acts.

It is in the following words, though, that Roosevelt propounded the theory that has thrown the country into a turmoil and brought many sincere people to the point at which they believe he has evolved some unheard-of political theory, originating they know not where, but with no relation to the genius of American life. Every man, he said, has "a right to be assured, to the fullest extent attainable in the safety of his savings . . . In all thought of property, this right is paramount; all other property rights must yield to it."

It is hard to reconcile this with the facts as we know them. In much thought of property, this right is anything but paramount. If Mr. Roosevelt had said that in every "theory" of property this right is paramount, he would have been on safe ground. That much is true. But a great deal of our thinking about property lags far behind any reputable theory. No doubt every American, not an outright criminal, agrees that the government is under an obligation to see that no man's savings are taken from him by force and violence; but vast numbers of us have never conceded that the government is obliged to prevent their being taken from him by guile. The ethics of the frontier horse-trader still play a large part in American business life.

When it is stated thus baldly, however, even business men

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who have indulged in some pretty sharp practice will admit that spoiling the Egyptians is not altogether the most admirable form of business endeavor. "Never give a sucker a break" is a maxim frequently followed, but rarely praised, in business circles. In short, our capitalism is like our Christianity—its practice falls a long way short of the excellence of its precepts. The assertion that no other property right should be allowed precedence over a man's right to the safety of what he has accumulated by his own labor and thrift is perfectly sound capitalism; but the sober truth is that it bears somewhat the same relation to current business practice that the Sermon on the Mount bears to the behavior of the average congregation. This passage of Roosevelt's speech has been little attacked for the same reason that nobody attacks the cardinal doctrines of the church—few of us live up to them, but we all accept them in principle, and to denounce them would be scandalous.

But why did Mr. Roosevelt consider it essential to drag into prominence this somewhat uncomfortably lofty doctrine at this time? One answer may be that the man is a sort of political Savonarola, grimly determined to effect a thorough-going reformation of manners and morals at no matter what cost to public tranquillity. It is a disturbing thought, for sincerely as we must admire the moral stature of the great reformers, there is no escaping the fact that their efforts made life very trying for ordinary folk. When man's eternal welfare is concerned this is, of course, a trivial objection; it is therefore invalid against religious leaders. But politicians deal with the things of this world, and when the issues are strictly mundane

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disturbance of the public peace assumes a larger significance. It is doubly and trebly significant as Mr. Roosevelt's third term begins for, considering the state of the rest of the world, the suggestion that we may have a wild fanatic in control of American affairs is a suggestion that is sinister indeed.

A more adequate answer must depend upon a survey of Mr. Roosevelt's record in office, which will be attempted later; but undoubtedly the reasons that moved him to cut ruthlessly through tradition and precedent in office are the reasons that made him dig so deeply into the theory of government in the Commonwealth Club speech. Some examination of them seems, then, in order at this place.

Without a doubt Franklin D. Roosevelt is a pretty decent citizen, and without a doubt every decent citizen approves of efforts to make our political and economic system conform more closely to the ethical standards we profess. To this extent, it may be taken for granted that he is a reformer—as who isn't? But there is a great gulf between the man who acts correctly himself and opposes rascality in general, and the flaming evangel who feels himself charged with the mission of rooting out evil from high places and low. Mr. Roosevelt may be such an evangel, but there are several reasons for doubting it. In the first place, his heredity and training are against it. Not many hard-headed Dutchmen are instigated to launch Holy Wars out of moral indignation against the infidel. Not many Groton-*cum*-Harvard products have developed that sort of fanaticism. Not many men enjoying comfortable incomes derived from well-placed investments have done it. Hence, before we assume that this man has

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done it, it would seem to be the part of prudence to eliminate all other hypotheses that might account for the facts.

Mr. Roosevelt himself has always exhibited a marked distaste for the role of Captain of the Hosts of Light. Even the relatively innocuous title of humanitarian makes small appeal to him. As far back as 1929, in his first inaugural as Governor of New York, he spoke of the program of social legislation begun by Smith which he was promising to continue, in this style: "I object to having this spirit of personal civil responsibility to the State and to the individual which has placed New York in the lead as a progressive commonwealth, described as humanitarian. It is far more than that. It is the recognition that our civilization cannot endure unless we, as individuals, realize our personal responsibility to and dependence on the rest of the world. For it is literally true that the self-supporting man or woman has become extinct as the man of the stone age. Without the help of thousands of others, any one of us would die, naked and starved. Consider the bread upon our table, the clothes upon our backs, the luxuries that make life pleasant; how many men worked in sunlit fields, in dark mines, in the fierce heat of molten metal, and among the looms and wheels of countless factories, in order to create them for our use and enjoyment."

This was in January, 1929, that is to say, well in advance of the grand explosion which took place the following October. If Roosevelt was convinced before the boom burst that the endurance of civilization depended upon recognition of social responsibility, certainly the events of the next three years were not likely to alter that opinion. In the beginning

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of 1929 the country still thought itself prosperous and therefore was relatively contented; toward the end of 1932 it was dragging the very bottom of the depression, and resentment against what the dispossessed regarded as indifference to their fate in high places was beginning to flame in many directions. By that time many others were beginning to cherish, and openly to express, doubts as to the survival of the sort of civilization we had built up in America.

If a man in these circumstances developed a profound conviction that some very thorough-going renovations of our political and economic system were urgently necessary, is that proof that he was possessed of the reformer's zeal? Suppose, for the sake of argument, that such a man were completely devoid of evangelistic fervor, but instead of it had three other qualities, (a) unusually complete and well-documented information regarding the situation as it actually existed, (b) the capacity to draw from a clear premise a logical conclusion, and (c) courage—would not such a man reach precisely the conclusion that Mr. Roosevelt reached?

Well-to-do people of Dutch ancestry and graduates of Groton and Harvard may not be promising material out of which to develop saints and martyrs, but they frequently exhibit a remarkable capacity to look after their own interests. It must never be forgotten that the world as it was suited Franklin D. Roosevelt admirably. His place in that world was pleasant and much more secure than that of most men. He must have been a fool of almost unexampled proportions to desire, much less to try to effect, the demolition of that world. On the contrary, such a man could be relied



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on to spare no effort to preserve it; and if he perceived that preserving it all was impracticable, he would do everything possible to preserve all of it that he could. If certain changes were necessary to shore up the toppling structure, it is precisely a man of Roosevelt's type who might be expected to be most energetic, resolute and emphatic in demanding that the changes be made, thoroughly and speedily.

In short, while the Commonwealth Club speech might have been made by a man burning with desire to "set the crooked straight," it might just as well have been made by a man whose primary motive was enlightened self-interest. To some of Mr. Roosevelt's admirers this may be repugnant. Some of them are so firmly convinced that he is a sort of merger of Galahad, St. George and Alfred the Great that even the suggestion that what he most desires is to defend and maintain the sort of world he finds pleasant will seem to them a suggestion that there is no true greatness in the man.

But that doesn't follow at all. One of the rarest of human qualities is the ability to appraise correctly a novel and confused situation; and almost as rare is the courage, once the appraisal is made, to do what is necessary resolutely and promptly. The fact that capitalism suits Mr. Roosevelt's own tastes and needs certainly does not impugn the sincerity of his belief that it suits the tastes and needs of the rest of the country. Nor does his motive in defending it have much, if any, bearing upon the difficulty of the job. I refuse to admit that a man's wish to preserve a system that has been good

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for him is necessarily a low motive; but if it were, the fact remains that men have sometimes performed great deeds from low motives. The British army cherishes the tradition of the captain in the first World War who did a deed that won the Victoria Cross, and who explained later that he took the desperate chance because a major's pay is higher than a captain's and he wanted the money. If it could be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that Franklin D. Roosevelt took our political and economic system apart and put it together again in a different fashion for no other reason than a desire to spend his declining years in reasonable comfort at Hyde Park, that would not affect the size of the job, nor the capacity of the man who could do it.

In other words, the question of whether the President is a great man or a small one does not depend upon the source of his inspiration. The effect was produced, and it remains the same effect, whether its inspiration was mystical frenzy, or cool, shrewd common sense. The effect will determine the man's place in history, not the motive. If Mr. Roosevelt is assigned a great place, his greatness will not be affected unfavorably if time reveals that he was a realist throughout.

But the motive is tremendously important from another standpoint, which is the standpoint of the plain citizen whose fate at this moment is very largely in the President's hands. It is difficult to cite another period in the world's history when humanity was afflicted with so many frenetic rulers. Hitler is the archetype of the class, but he is far from being its only example. Mussolini, Franco, Pétain and a dozen puppet rulers of puppet states have acted according to procedures

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not reducible to any known rule of reason and, indeed, have frankly disclaimed any obligation to proceed in accordance with such rules. Race, blood, "the leadership principle," historicity and God knows what other indeterminate and indefinable concepts have been offered as the bases of policies whose effects were of the gravest consequence to half mankind.

The thought that we, too, may be in the hands of such a man is not encouraging to people who are persuaded that their one fair chance of dying in bed, comforted by the hope that their children may be able to live a reasonably decent life, depends upon the return of reason to the statesmen. The thought prevails in minds not a few; which accounts for the dismal view of the future taken by large numbers of Americans. But the most deeply pessimistic usually fail to take into account that the propagation of this idea has been politically profitable for more than eight years. The very fact that Mr. Roosevelt's success in winning elections has been phenomenal is a sufficient guarantee that his opponents are omitting the use of no weapon that ingenuity can suggest to stop him. The charge that he is a fanatic is, indeed, one of the milder accusations that have been brought against him; and had not the world been given, of late, such bitter demonstrations of what fanaticism in high places may mean, that charge would have carried little weight. Even as it is, the charge of fanaticism cannot affect the President directly, because the election is already won; but it can make, and it is making, many honest Americans most unhappy. Therefore it is worth while to point out that the charge is not necessarily true, because

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a very different motivation may have led him into the course of action he pursued.

A man whose memory of 1933 is still keen, and who re-reads the Commonwealth Club speech today may note one great discrepancy between the text and his memory of events. It is true that a large part of the New Deal is forecast in that speech; but the part that blazes most vividly in men's memories is not so much as mentioned. This part is what has come to be known as the Hundred Days—the first few months after March 4, 1933.

No one who lived through that period will ever forget it, for not since the days of Andrew Jackson, if, indeed, ever, have so many and such spectacular political fireworks been set off in so short a time. Most of us ended in a complete daze and it took us years to discover all that had happened—in fact, it is not certain that we have learned it all even yet.

But it is not mentioned in the Commonwealth Club speech for the simple, but sufficient, reason that it was not foreseen. Franklin D. Roosevelt is fairly prescient, but he is not the seventh son of a seventh son, and on September 23, 1932, he lacked foreknowledge of the conditions he was destined to confront six months later. Neither had anyone else foreseen them. The well-informed knew, of course, that the American banking system was under a terrific strain. The best-informed knew that serious weaknesses had developed within it. But it is doubtful that any man in the country was at that moment certain that the system was doomed to crash. Mr. Hoover, indeed, cherished the curious illusion that the situation was

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improving. He believed that the worst moment had been passed early in the summer and that a perceptible lessening of the tension had subsequently occurred. Mr. Roosevelt did not share this belief, but he certainly did not look for the sort of calamity that was on the way.

The speech, therefore, envisaged a series of adjustments that were to be made without haste and with no necessity for improvisation. As it turned out, the atmosphere in which the program had to be launched was anything but what had been expected. The crash of the banking system necessitated swift action in a dozen directions before the program could be considered; yet the program was always in mind, and the improvisations that were made were always of such a nature that they could be fitted into what had been planned.

This accounts, partially at least, for two things, first, the astonishing certainty with which the President moved during that bewildering and frightening period, and, second, for the impression that much of the New Deal itself consisted of happy improvisations. Perhaps it is regrettable that it should be so, but it is indubitably true that few Americans remember, in March, what a political candidate said the previous September; and when they do, it is usually because the speech included some especially effective blast at the opposition, or some promise of definite action in which people are especially interested. This speech had neither. It was a discourse on the theory of government, and men whose ears were deafened by the roar of exploding banks were highly unlikely to pay heed to anyone's theories of government.

The first swift steps—the closing of the banks, the setting

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up of the examining committee in the Treasury Department, the instant calling of Congress, and so on—obviously were improvisations, and were never presented in any other guise. But the President went rapidly ahead, presented to a dazed and uncertain Congress one immensely important bill after another, and a great many people thought he was continuing to improvise long after he had launched into his carefully prepared program. Only those who had remembered and had studied carefully that speech made back in September were aware that what seemed to be brilliant inspirations were frequently plans that had been matured through months and years of study.

Mr. Moley is authority for the statement that there were at least two men in public life who had read the Commonwealth Club speech and who understood at least part of what it implied. These were President Hoover and Secretary of the Treasury Ogden Mills. Both were appalled, not by any specific legislation outlined, for none is suggested, but by the bold proclamation of a change in the very spirit of the government. Mr. Hoover and Mr. Mills are both exceedingly skeptical of the possibility of adapting our economic organizations to the service of the people by political action. This is not astonishing, for they are both business men, primarily, and the business man is inevitably skeptical of the efficacy of political action, just as the divine is skeptical of legal action, and the lawyer is skeptical of moral pressure and the doctor is skeptical of both when it comes to remedying social ills. It is natural for any man to rely on the forces with which he

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is most familiar to accomplish his purposes and to be doubtful of all others.

Probably more appalling to men with the training and mental attitudes of Messrs. Hoover and Mills even than the passage about adapting economic organizations was the passage in which Mr. Roosevelt discussed the place in modern social organization of the type of men who built the country's industrial plant. As more and more legislation in line with this discussion was put upon the statute books, more and more people found themselves in agreement with Messrs. Hoover and Mills. True, still larger numbers at the same time found themselves in agreement with Mr. Roosevelt, as the election returns have consistently shown. Nevertheless, partly by political propaganda, but more largely by business propaganda—effective because it is sincere—one theory about the New Deal has been established more firmly than any other. It is the theory of the New Deal's hostility to business.

The nature and the extent of this hostility is proclaimed with great precision in the Commonwealth Club speech. The hostility exists. It is idle for any friend of Mr. Roosevelt to deny it, when he has proclaimed it himself. But it has been to the interest of his opponents to distort and misconstrue it, and they have done so. What Mr. Roosevelt did was to draw an extraordinarily vivid thumb-nail sketch of certain phases of our economic development and to proclaim the end of those phases. His exact words deserve repetition and re-examination. Here they are:

“It was in the middle of the nineteenth century that a new

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force was released and a new dream created. The force was what is called the industrial revolution, the advance of steam and machinery and the rise of the forerunners of the modern industrial plant. The dream was the dream of an economic machine, able to raise the standard of living for everyone; to bring luxury within the reach of the humblest; to annihilate distance by steam power and later by electricity, and to release everyone from the drudgery of the heaviest manual toil. . . . There was, however, a shadow over the dream. To be made real, it required use of the talents of men of tremendous will and tremendous ambition, since by no other force could the problems of financing and engineering and new developments be brought to a consummation.

"So manifest were the advantages of the machine age, however, that the United States fearlessly, cheerfully, and, I think, rightly, accepted the bitter with the sweet. It was thought that no price was too high to pay for the advantages which we could draw from a finished industrial system. The history of the last half century is accordingly in large measure a history of a group of financial Titans, whose methods were not scrutinized with too much care, and who were honored in proportion as they produced the results, irrespective of the means they used. The financiers who pushed the railroads to the Pacific were always ruthless, often wasteful, and frequently corrupt; but they did build railroads and we have them today. It has been estimated that the American investor paid for the American railway system more than three times over in the process; but despite this fact, the net advantage was to the United States. As long as we had free land; as long as population was growing by leaps and bounds; as



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long as our industrial plants were insufficient to supply our own needs, society chose to give the ambitious man free play and unlimited reward provided only that he produced the economic plant so much desired. . . .

"In retrospect we can see now that the turn of the tide came with the turn of the century. We were reaching our last frontier; there was no more free land and our industrial combinations had become great uncontrolled and irresponsible units of power within the state. . . . Clearly, all this calls for a reappraisal of values. A mere builder of more industrial plants, a creator of more railroad systems, an organizer of more corporations, is as likely to be a danger as a help. The day of the great promoter or the financial Titan, to whom we granted anything if only he would build, is over. . . . The day of enlightened administration has come."

There is nothing particularly original in this. It is stated succinctly and with unusual clarity, but half the historians and professors of economics in the country have said the same thing in a hundred thousand words. Nevertheless, when Messrs. Hoover and Mills regarded it as radicalism, they were right. The radicalism lay in the fact that this time it was stated by a man who was shortly to be in position to do something about it. The suggestion that capitalism be made to work as, in theory, it ought to work is unquestionably radicalism; but there is nothing alien about it. To hold otherwise is to hold that Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Bryan, Altgeld and all the other thunderers against "malefactors of great wealth" were un-American.

Friends of Mr. Roosevelt have argued long and earnestly, though, that it is an expression of hostility, not to business,

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but to crooked business. But it is not so stipulated in the speech itself. The speech describes the Titans as "frequently" corrupt, but it does not say they were always corrupt; it says merely that they were always ruthless and that they created "uncontrolled and irresponsible units of power within the state." It is for this reason it declares that their day is over. It is a fair assumption that it would have made the same declaration if they had not been corrupt at all.

The New Deal's hostility to business therefore is to be measured by the answer to another question. It is, to what extent does American business still hold as one of its ideals the ruthless, but not necessarily corrupt, creator of uncontrolled and irresponsible units of power within the state? To the extent that the buccaneer is still regarded with admiration by business, it is fairly plain that business must find the New Deal hostile. But this is certainly no new development. It was Theodore Roosevelt, not Franklin, who invented the phrase, "malefactors of great wealth," and he, too, was venomously denounced as the enemy of all business because of his headlong assaults on crooked business. If Franklin Roosevelt extends the assault to forces that are social menaces, even though they may not be criminal in the eyes of the law, he has merely carried somewhat further, but in the same direction, an attack that was being pressed hard at least forty years ago.

One characteristic of this part of the speech has received curiously little attention. It is the cold realism with which the speaker appraised the service of the men whose day he declared is over. Realism, of course, is a quality of which

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every party claims a monopoly; or which, at least, it invariably denies to the opposition. It follows that realism is a grossly abused word. The wilder the romantic, the more certain he is that he is a realist; while many people who should know better apply the name of realism to cheap and fraudulent cynicism which has no more relation to fact than the songs of the troubadours have to the true qualities of their ladies. In speaking of Mr. Roosevelt's realism, therefore, it should perhaps be explained that the word is intended to convey no more than a disposition to admit the existence of a fact even when it is inconvenient.

The ruthless and powerful captains of industry who built, and at the same time looted, the country between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Twentieth Century have been denounced many times by politicians of all parties. But rarely has a man in the act of challenging them been so careful to take formal notice of their merits. The country accepted these men, "I think rightly," said Mr. Roosevelt. This is an admission without apology that to his way of thinking even a pirate may have his uses, given the right combination of time and circumstance. It was precisely the line of reasoning followed by Andrew Jackson when Jean Lafitte showed up at New Orleans. Lafitte and his men were pirates; but Jackson at the moment was confronting a menace far worse than piracy, and he wasted no time investigating the moral quality of any man who could, and would, cut down a British soldier.

But this passage is more than a rather unusual approach to an old American problem. It illuminates a quality of the

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President's mind that many people do not believe exists, although proofs of it are numerous and strong. This is his genuine satisfaction with the American record. No man has shattered more precedents. No man has torn down more ancient structures. No man has altered more rapidly and radically the whole American scheme of things. Yet no man believes more implicitly that the building of America was, on the whole, a pretty good job.

People to whom this seems doubtful should ponder the fact that nobody has been more bitterly disappointed in Mr. Roosevelt than the extreme radicals. No Republican has denounced him with such invective as Huey Long used to pour out for hours in the Senate. The crustiest member of the Union League Club has never hurled at him such objurgations as the Communist press used constantly until suddenly it became apparent that whereas he needed them not at all, they needed him desperately. The reason for this radical hatred is not far to seek. It arises from the fact that he who they had hoped would be the executioner of capitalism, because he applied the knife to it ruthlessly, may be, in fact, a surgeon, from whose operations capitalism may emerge, not dead, but stronger than ever and possessed of a renewed lease of life. The radicals may not be certain of this, but they certainly fear it, and their fears are patently well-founded.

Any man who has made a study of American history appreciably more profound than that required of children in the elementary schools knows that there are dark and shameful pages in it. Every decent man regrets them. The uncompromising moralist denounces them. But the man who really

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knows how the country grew and how it lives finds in some of these pages many perplexities. If he is honest, as well as informed, he cannot confine himself either to regret or to denunciation. The buccaneers of the post-Civil War period constitute a case in point. Their piracies are notorious, but their accomplishments were magnificent. A man of the type of Wendell Phillips, who called Abraham Lincoln "the slavehound of Illinois," has no doubts. Robbers are robbers, and any man who condones robbery is a slippery and shifty fellow, in the opinion of such people. These people are honest, and in many respects worthy, but they make bad judges of a nation's leaders.

They have been relentless opponents of Roosevelt and they will remain so until the end. Their opposition is not of great historical significance, however, because they have opposed every strong man who has occupied the office of President of the United States, and doubtless will oppose all who come hereafter. The fact that the President believes, and has publicly stated, that he thinks the country, on the whole, did well to tolerate gigantic robbery when that was the only apparent means to obtain services that it greatly needed, brands him, in the minds of the intolerant, as Lincoln's reasonable effort to make the law conform to the facts branded him in Wendell Phillips' mind.

But less rigid observers will find in this passage no more than willingness to face an obvious fact although, for the purpose in hand, it was an inconvenient fact. Roosevelt was striving to make the point that the day of the ruthless Titans is over, and, since they are no longer essential, they will no

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longer be tolerated. Obviously, it would have been convenient to denounce their crimes without reference to their services. But he was making a serious speech on the theory of government, not an impassioned appeal for votes. It is his sincere belief that the scoundrels did a good job. He has the sort of mind that can at once deprecate a strong man's crimes and admire and rejoice in his strength.

But is not that the only sort of mind that can take genuine pride in American history? Or the history of any other nation? The most superficial acquaintance with the record is enough to show that our institutions, including the most hallowed, have been created by the efforts of all sorts of men, including many extremely sinful ones. If we were to cast out all but the work of the saints, little indeed would remain.

Call it what you will, call it patriotism, or call it merely an intelligent interest in the perpetuation and betterment of the nation, a desire to improve upon the existing system is the very antithesis of a desire to demolish it. Pride in it, pride that goes to the point of condoning even those villainies through which great things were done, is certainly not likely to be fruitful of a desire to demolish it. The political extremist may be the most honest of men, but he is always a despairing man. No matter how bright his vision of the ideal social order may be, his view of the existing order is hopeless; and that gives rise to his wish to demolish it.

Now Franklin D. Roosevelt has been called many things in the course of a long political career, but it is not on record that anyone has called him a despairing man. His critics, indeed, have commonly gone to the other extreme; they

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have described him as immoderately, even pathologically, optimistic. He has read a good deal of American history—a great deal of American naval history—and the tares that have grown up with the wheat have not escaped his observation. But he approved the decision of Uncle Sam, that good husbandman, not to attempt to root them out while the crop was maturing. If the declaration at San Francisco bears an ominous interpretation, it is only in its implication that now reaping time is at hand, and it is the moment for the husbandman to say to his reapers, "Gather ye first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." This is admittedly a bit startling, and it may be injudicious; but it is nothing unprecedented, nothing strange, nothing alien to American political thought.

Were the analysis of the theory of the New Deal dropped at this point, the reader would be forced to the conclusion that its practice must have been entirely discordant with its theory; for the analysis to this point has stressed the lack of anything hitherto unknown in the theory. Any man with eyes in his head knows that within the last eight years something new, whether alien or not, has been injected into the American governmental system. If Mr. Roosevelt, in stating his theory of government, did not include that element, then obviously he must have introduced it when he started putting his theories in practice, for its presence is incontrovertible.

The new element is perceptible in the Commonwealth Club speech, but it is negative, it is an omission. Most of what Mr. Roosevelt declared had been declared many times

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before. Most of what Mr. Roosevelt proposed had been proposed before, some of it many times. But there is nowhere apparent in the speech a trace of that distrust of government which Jefferson dinned into the ears of the country so often and so long that it became a cardinal doctrine, not of his own party only, but also of the opposition. Republican campaigners, as well as Democratic, have explicitly avowed, or tacitly assumed, that government is by its very nature inimical to freedom. It is probable that most Americans are under the impression that the checks and balances of our system were devised to protect the liberty of the individual against the menace of government. The truth is, of course, that they were devised to protect the government against the menace of individual liberty; but they have, as a matter of historical fact, worked both ways.

Now it may as well be admitted at once that his lack of this distrust of government is Mr. Roosevelt's greatest fault, as a statesman. The same belief in the power of government is characteristic of all dictators.

Nevertheless, this same thing is at the same time Mr. Roosevelt's greatest virtue, as a statesman. It is characteristic of all creators of great nations.

The reason is that this confidence in the power of government is, in reality, self-confidence, which is a function of strength; and strength may be, and frequently is, both a virtue and a vice in the same man.

If history a decade or a generation hence makes a case against Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, it will trace its origin to this quality, which will then be termed,



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not self-confidence, but over-confidence. The President himself is not unaware of this. He mentioned it once, astounding his enemies and taking aback some of his friends. That mention was the famous passage in the Message to Congress of January 3, 1936: "In thirty-four months we have built up new instruments of public power. In the hands of a people's government this power is wholesome and proper. But in the hands of political puppets of an economic autocracy such power would provide shackles for the liberties of the people." This is a flat, undeniable admission that the President has taken hair-raising chances.

The people who have opposed him for that reason have a case. It is idle for the President's supporters to deny it, for it is true. Mr. Roosevelt's assumption is, of course, that the people may be trusted to keep the new powers in the hands of a people's government; but why he makes that assumption is not at all clear. The people elected Grant. The people elected Harding. Evidence is lacking that the people's perspicuity or their morality has increased so largely that a repetition of such mistakes is henceforth impossible. On the contrary, most men who are not completely carried away by enthusiasm for what has been done in the last eight years cherish a somber belief, not only that the people can be mistaken again, but that they will be mistaken again. If history is to any appreciable extent a guide to the future, it is as certain as anything human can be that the time will come when "political puppets" of some sort of autocracy will gain control again. Perhaps it will not be an economic autocracy, but it will consist of persons who are not friends, but exploiters

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of the people. The New Deal has worked many changes, but it has not abolished greed and cunning, nor altered their nature; it has not abolished stupidity and credulity, nor rendered them less fatal. But it has, by the confession of its leader, created new instruments which greed and cunning may employ for the more effective exploitation of the stupid and the credulous. On this count, Franklin D. Roosevelt will certainly be tried before the bar of history, and if he does not stand condemned it will be on the ground of extenuating circumstances.

That, however, is for the future to decide. No attempt will be made in these pages either to acquit Mr. Roosevelt, or to convict him; history will assign him a place without much regard for the opinion of this generation, either favorable or unfavorable. What is of primary importance, to us, here and now, is not Mr. Roosevelt's mental, moral and spiritual condition, but our own. Assume a man whose reading of history has convinced him that Jefferson was right in his contention that he who governs best is he who governs least—certainly right in the beginning of the eighteenth century and in the United States. The assumption should not be difficult, for such men are plentiful. Assume, further, that our man is willing—since there is not much he can do about it anyway—to give Mr. Roosevelt the benefit of any reasonable doubt. The question then is, where is the reasonable doubt that he has abandoned, subverted, and, indeed, reversed a fundamental American tradition that was accepted by all his predecessors?

The answer is that none of his predecessors, meaning by

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that the strong Presidents who have preceded him, ever accepted that tradition.

Not a single man of force who has occupied the office has failed to extend the powers of government. The case of Thomas Jefferson himself is perhaps the most glaring example in the list. He, who held in theory the doctrine of strictly limiting the powers of the Federal government, it was who, as Al Smith said of Wilson, "adjourned the Constitution" long enough to effect the Louisiana Purchase. He it was who laid the embargo, legislative ancestor of the 'Neutrality Resolution of 1937. He it was who originated the policy of "adapting existing economic organizations" to the service of the foreign policy of the country. It might be argued with some plausibility that he extended the powers of government—proportionately to what they were before—quite as far as the New Deal has extended them.

Surely, one need do no more than mention the name of Andrew Jackson in this connection. The man who smashed the Bank of the United States, shattered the doctrine of States' Rights, and opened the way to the creation of the Spoils System, by those three acts, not to mention countless others, made a record of extending the powers of government that certainly was not equaled up to 1932.

Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and his suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* are more famous, but hardly more important, extensions of governmental power than the way he laid hands on the fiscal, industrial and transportation systems of the country to adapt them to the service of the army.

When Grover Cleveland sent Federal troops into Chicago

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during the Pullman strike, he contended that he was merely exercising a latent but ancient power. Perhaps he was, but he set a precedent, nevertheless.

Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson are so near our own times that there is hardly a man of voting age in the country who is not familiar with their records of extension of governmental power.

Multiplication of precedents may not establish the rectitude of a policy, but many precedents certainly suggest the existence of some strong force constantly exerting pressure in the direction of that policy. To say that it is the nature of power to strive to extend itself is too simple and easy an answer. It must be borne in mind that the men who did most to extend the power of the government are by common consent ranked among the great Presidents. If the men who have given the country what it regarded as good government have, without exception, been conspicuous for their extension of the power of government, the two facts deserve some study in connection with each other.

The connection is not far to seek. The extensions of governmental power effected by the greatest Presidents were nearly always forced by some change in the environment, occasionally political or social, but usually technological or based on technology; and in every case a change over which the President had no control. The Louisiana Purchase and the embargo, for example, were both forced by political changes, not here, but in Europe, which reacted upon this country in unprecedented and unforeseen ways. Jackson's assault on the Bank was based upon what he, at least, con-

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ceived as an intolerable extension of the power of finance over both government and people; and his assault upon States' Rights was precipitated by Nullification. The Emancipation Proclamation was a military measure, forced by the exigencies of war. So was suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*; it was employed because espionage had become doubly dangerous, and that increased danger was due to the development of means of almost instantaneous communication. In 1812 Madison could afford to ignore a seditious newspaper in Baltimore, because the slowness of communication made it highly improbable that its inflammatory utterances would receive any wide circulation; but with news being transmitted by telegraph, Lincoln could take no such risks. Theodore Roosevelt emancipated no slaves for the same reason that Jefferson attacked no trusts, to wit, the reason that in his time there were none; his particular extension of the powers of government was in the economic field, not of his choice, but because circumstance forced him into that field.

To put it another way, most of the extensions of governmental power effected by the great American Presidents were in fact cases of recognition of the duty of the government to exercise in some new field its original power to maintain order and promote the general welfare. That the extension of governmental power is an inevitable accompaniment of the physical growth of the country is evident. When a community consists of half a dozen houses scattered along half a mile of highway, there is no occasion for police control of automobile parking; but when the highway has become a

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city street, the power of government must be extended over parking, lest conditions become intolerable.

The increasing congestion of the country—and of the whole world, for that matter—is attributable only in part to its increasing population. To an enormous extent it arises from the abolition of time and distance as obstacles to effective contact, which is the work of technology. John D. Rockefeller demonstrated that with the facilities of modern finance, assisted by modern communication and transportation, it is quite feasible for a man in New York to crowd one in Texas—to crowd him to the wall, in fact. When the government was established, the date of the inauguration of a new President was fixed at approximately four months after his election because it was just about two months' journey from Philadelphia to south Georgia. Ideas can travel no faster than news, and relatively few live as long as two months; therefore the minds of people at the extreme ends of the country were rarely jostled by the ephemeral notions generated at the centers of population. Today every whimsey of an official at Washington, especially if it is fantastic to the verge of lunacy, is promptly thrust upon the attention of someone in each of three thousand counties. Whether it is a new fashion, a new song, or a new smoking-room story, any novelty permeates the country with what would have been regarded, a hundred years ago, as miraculous speed. Our minds jostle each other even more than our bodies do. To assume that government can remain unaffected by so profound an alteration in its environment would be silly indeed.

Yet Thomas Jefferson was a highly intelligent man. Why

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did he insistently proclaim a principle to which he did not adhere and to which none of the first-rate men among his successors has adhered? The principal reason was that within Jefferson's experience extensions of the powers of government had proceeded in one direction only, the direction of restriction of the individual's freedom in order to enlarge that of the rulers. Naturally Jefferson was aware that extensions of governmental power are occasionally essential; otherwise he would never have consented to the substitution of the Constitution for the Articles of Confederation. He did not consent until it was agreed that certain basic liberties should be specifically guaranteed in a Bill of Rights, but when that was done, he agreed to the establishment of a more powerful central government because it obviously had to be done to avoid chaos.

Nevertheless, he regarded such extensions as dangerous in the extreme because he was realistic enough to deem it highly improbable that they would invariably be made in good faith. He was quite certain, indeed, that some of Marshall's extensions of the judicial power were made in anything but good faith. In this opinion he was certainly partly wrong, but it is easily possible that he was partly right, too. The great Chief Justice was frankly anti-democratic, and a good many of his decisions bear evidence of much less care for the rights of the people as a whole than for the rights of the propertied classes, which were the American equivalent of the aristocratic classes of Europe.

Jefferson naturally never dreamed of the acceleration of tempo with which changes were to occur shortly after his

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death. The industrial revolution was just beginning to make itself felt in this country in 1826, when Jefferson died. If the Sage of Monticello had been able to see fifty years ahead, probably he would have been more frightened than ever and passed from the earth as Calhoun did, in a mood of black despair.

To understand that Jefferson's fears were amply justified, a modern American need only look at Europe. In Italy, in Russia and in Germany governmental power has been extended until it has absorbed all power, with the final result of releasing upon the world such terrors as it had not suffered since the barbarians poured through the crumbling defenses of the Roman empire. It is not likely that Jefferson imagined anything remotely resembling Nazidom even in his worst nightmares; but he saw the rise and fall of the Napoleonic empire, and he envisaged the possibility that a strong American government would end in something like that.

If Roosevelt in presenting his theory of government refused to give any weight to Jefferson's fears, he had at least two logically defensible reasons for doing so. One—the one he stressed—was flat necessity. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven," saith Scripture, "a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up." The year 1932 was emphatically a time to build up the confidence of the American people in the power of their government to deliver them; for it was precisely those governments that had been powerless before the dragons ravishing the land that had been repudiated and destroyed by their own people. In Washington itself the



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United States Army had been called out to protect the seat of government, not against some foreign foe, but against men who had themselves fought for the government on foreign soil. In the Middle West troops were fighting milk farmers, and mobs were pulling judges off the bench. Huey Long, Father Coughlin, Dr. Townsend were stentorian voices of discontent making the welkin ring. The government in Washington was exhibiting an alarming similarity to the governments of Facta, in Italy, and of Brüning, in Germany; what had happened to Facta was history, and what was soon to happen to Brüning was foreshadowed. Action might be dangerous, but inaction would be suicidal in such circumstances, or so Mr. Roosevelt thought.

But there was also the argument that the expansion of the power of the American government has not followed the direction taken by those with which Jefferson was familiar. The five Presidents before Roosevelt who have done most to extend that power were all called dictators while they held office, because each of them extended the power of the government into areas it had not occupied before. Yet it is easily demonstrable that after the administration of each of the five, the ordinary citizen found himself possessed of wider, not narrower, personal freedom.

The inauguration of Jefferson signaled the collapse of the movement represented by the Alien and Sedition laws; the inauguration of Jackson signaled the collapse of a governmental oligarchy represented by "King Caucus" and his assault on the Bank wrecked a promising effort to establish plutocratic control; Lincoln's administration ended slavery;

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Theodore Roosevelt's was a continuous, if none too effective, assault on economic bondage; and Wilson's produced woman suffrage. It left us with Prohibition, too, but that proved to be a temporary restriction of freedom, whereas the enfranchisement of women is doubtless permanent. According to the Jeffersonian theory extending the power of the government must necessarily involve restricting the power of the individual to order his own life; but according to American history, it has not done so.

The great Presidents have not found it necessary to invade the field of personal liberty to extend the powers of government to the extent they thought necessary. Therein lies, of course, the characteristic distinction that separates them from the genuine dictators. In Europe no man has come to supreme power in these turbulent years without immediately sweeping away most, or all, of the civil rights previously enjoyed by his subjects. Freedom of thought, of expression, of worship and of movement have all been suppressed, usually as the first act of the new regime. Lincoln's suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* and Wilson's Espionage Act were both assaults on civil liberty; but they were both war measures and it is a sorry but certain fact that in time of war civil liberty goes overboard, no matter what type of man is President.

Of course, there must be a first time for everything, and it may be that at last the American people have chosen a strong President who will depart from the path followed by all the others and undertake to increase the power of government by invading the liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Thus far, however, the evidence to support the theory

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is meager. The New Deal, so far, has been guilty of only one conspicuous restriction of civil liberty; it is the clause in the Wagner Labor Relations Act that deprives an employer of his freedom of speech in discussing labor organization with his men. Even this was inserted in the law for the purpose of protecting the men from loss of their liberty of choice through intimidation; the error, therefore, arises, not from a disposition to assail liberty, but from an overzealous effort to protect it.

Against this we have had since 1933 a number of enactments and changes in administrative policy that extend, or restore, certain forms of individual freedom. The repeal of Prohibition is, of course, the most conspicuous; but we had, until the war menace terrified the country, a sharp reversal of the policy of taking legal action against men on account of their opinions, rather than on account of overt acts; we have had a change in the former policy of the Treasury Department under which every customs inspector at a port of entry was a censor of art and literature from whose decisions there was no appeal—the decision in such matters rests now with a highly-placed and highly-educated official of the Department at Washington; and we have had a long series of enactments protecting the right of labor to organize and to bargain through representatives of its own choosing.

Indeed, the gravamen of the charges against Mr. Roosevelt in this connection is that he has gone too far. He is accused of protecting too scrupulously the rights of the wrong people. It is alleged that he has been so extremely careful to avoid violating the prohibitions in the first ten

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amendments to the Constitution that he has come close to delivering us into the hands of saboteurs, seditionaries and fifth columnists. The inconsistency of calling him a dictator because he has been over-careful to protect the rights that dictators always suppress troubles the opponents of the President not at all.

If the New Deal has erred in this matter of civil liberty, its error is certainly in the libertarian direction, rather than in the other. If it is to be blamed at all, it is for letting suspect Communists go free, not for laying honest Republicans by the heels.

No effort will be made here to establish the righteousness of its course. Ever since the foundation of the republic we have had differences of opinion among honest men, and it is only a blind partisan who contends, or believes, that all the right is on his side and that his opponents must be devoid of both integrity and intelligence. Mr. Roosevelt may have over-estimated heavily the ability of the people to control the forces he has unleashed; and if he has done so, to that extent he is in error, and his rule is an affliction. But for the purpose of this argument that is not the point; the point is that in omitting from his discussion of government any lengthy consideration of the dangers inherent in its extension, he was merely refusing to discuss a question that he regarded as purely academic.

The theory of the New Deal, as outlined in the Commonwealth Club speech, is the theory of dynamic, as opposed to static, government. This is a somewhat sinister term, since Hitler's is also a theory of dynamic government. But the

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parallelism is of the briefest; the two men's theories diverge immediately at the point of their application to the individual, Hitler's following the line taken by every tyrant in history, toward suppression, and Roosevelt's taking the old American line of extension of individual freedom. Carried to an absurd extreme Roosevelt's line might be as ruinous as Hitler's but not for the same reasons.

As the proponent of a theory of action, however, Roosevelt would have been in an absurd position had he devoted any considerable part of his time to a discussion of the perils of action. He was not unmindful of them, but he was contemptuous of them. It is admittedly a dangerous attitude; but it is the attitude assumed in practice by every strong President. If it comes to that, strong Presidents are dangerous. The American people have sensed that fact and have always accepted strong Presidents reluctantly, and only under the stress of unusual excitement. When skies are serene and all seems well, their ideal President is not George Washington, but Calvin Coolidge. A significant measure of the American temperament is to be found in the list of men who have not been President—Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, the two Clintons, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Stephen A. Douglas, William H. Seward and so on down to James G. Blaine and William J. Bryan. Let the list end there to avoid invidious interpretations regarding men still living.

But the republic has survived because this prudence is not absolute and immutable. Somehow, whenever a storm of sufficient violence blows up, the people have the wit and energy to set aside their ingrained suspicion of the powerful

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leader. At such times they adopt the policy recommended in one of their favorite hymns—

Let courage rise with danger  
And strength to strength oppose.

Is not this precisely what they did in 1932? The stress was terrific. Hoover was obviously out of his depth. Then came a man proposing, not prudence, but the deliberate assumption of risks in the hope of great gains, and the American people took a gambling chance, not because his offer was new and strange, but because it was precisely the sort of offer to which they had always responded in comparable circumstances in the past. A perilous course? Yes, beyond a doubt—but as typically American as anything one can imagine.

## CHAPTER VII

THE first inaugural address of Franklin D. Roosevelt, on March 4, 1933, was one of the most dramatic speeches ever made in the United States. Within an hour it transformed a party leader into a national leader, for it electrified the country. Many reasons have been advanced for its success, and there is doubtless some truth in all of them; but one, that may underlie all the others, has been curiously little emphasized.

This is the fact that it was the second time that man had made that speech.

The other time he made it to an audience of one, and this time to an audience of a hundred and twenty-five millions. The first time it was only a sentence, and this time it was a carefully prepared address. But in both cases the circumstances were similar, and both times it was essentially the same speech.

"Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," Roosevelt proclaimed in 1933. "I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems." He spoke well; but he had spoken just as well a dozen

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years before, when, overtaken by calamity the first time, he had said to an audience consisting of one woman, "I'll beat this thing." Analyze the famous inaugural address of 1933, and the only essential difference you will find in it is a change from the singular to the plural. All that tremendously effective speech said was "We'll beat this thing."

All the world wondered at the amazing courage of the man, for never since the first inauguration of Abraham Lincoln had a President come to his inauguration day under gloomier auspices. On February 14 the banks of Michigan had closed for a "holiday" decreed by the Governor; on February 25 the banks of Maryland had followed suit; every day thereafter one or more States closed, and on the very morning of Inauguration Day New York and Illinois went down. The nation was stunned, its economic system paralyzed.

What a welcome to an incoming President, and for Franklin D. Roosevelt, in particular, what a sardonic fate! For the second time he had just attained a position where life seemed to be opening out before him in a long, sunny reach. After years of labor and combat he had touched the summit of political power, and he had come to office with plans which he believed would result, if they were worked out carefully and adequately, in a renovation and reconstruction of our political and economic system that would buttress the nation against all assaults for years and perhaps for generations. Given a fair chance, he believed that he might be a great President—and on the very day of his inauguration, the whole system collapsed so that when he rose to make his



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speech he found himself heir to a banking system reduced to rubble and ruin, the titular leader of a paralyzed nation.

But perhaps it was just at this moment that he collected the arrears due him for all the black days and pain-ridden nights he had endured a dozen years before. For he was the one man in public life to whom paralysis was an old story. Under the spur of necessity he had steeled his soul against it long ago, and when he cried, "All we have to fear is fear itself," he spoke of what he knew, he spoke out of bitter experience; so the listening nation caught the ring of truth in his words, and believed.

If this seems a far-fetched explanation, consider the indubitable fact that the triumph he won on March 4 was purely a psychological triumph. Earnest and careful analysts—the editors of the London *Economist*, among others—reviewing the record afterward have been astonished and perhaps a bit scandalized to discover how little he actually did during that first week, if doing is measured by concrete action. He issued a proclamation closing the banks, but the banks were already closed, and all the proclamation did was to give them some color of legal authority for refusing to re-open. He called Congress into extra session, but that, in itself, changed nothing. The moment his speech was over he shot a list of Cabinet appointments to the Senate, and the Senate confirmed them all with break-neck speed; but he would have named his Cabinet within a few hours, anyhow, and the Senate always confirms Cabinet appointments.

Nevertheless, something happened. When that speech was finished, he had a nation behind him, a nation convinced

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that great events were impending. Yet more eloquent speeches by far have been made in Washington, times without number, with no such electrical effect. Something, whether in the words, or in the tone, or in the placing of emphasis, convinced the people that here was a man who could survey the wreckage of all his and their hopes, and yet not be appalled. Nobody stopped to analyze it. Nobody paid much attention to the details of what he promised. The great thing, to a terrified country, was the discovery that the President wasn't afraid; and once the people discovered that, they were his to command.

This part of it is familiar enough. Everyone knows that in a moment of general panic any unterrified man is king, and other men rush to obey him. The difficult thing to account for is not the effect of his courage, but its existence. Oh, he was always brave enough physically. During the war he had crossed a submarine-infested ocean and had visited the battle front with no trepidation. More recently he had come through a still worse test—two weeks before the inauguration, as he landed at Miami after a vacation cruise, a homicidal maniac made a desperate effort to assassinate him, shooting five people in the group around him and killing the Mayor of Chicago. Not only was Roosevelt perfectly cool throughout the excitement but, according to Moley, suffered no perceptible reaction afterward.

But the situation he faced on Inauguration Day called for a different type of courage, a type that is rarely, if ever, born in a man, as physical bravery is. The courage that keeps a man steady when he faces an assassin's pistol may be instinc-

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tive, but not so the courage that steadies him as he faces threats of the ruin of his plans, the blasting of his hopes, the frustration of his whole life's endeavor. That sort of courage is acquired, and it is not often acquired by happy experiences and easy triumphs. They do not teach that courage at the best of schools, not even at Groton and Harvard; men do not learn it by winning cases at the bar, nor by being elected to office. Sometimes it is learned in war, but hardly when one goes through war as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. As a rule, it is only when a man's pride in his own strength has been shattered, when he has stared long into the abyss of despair, that there filters into his mind, usually little by little, the knowledge that the only thing he really has to fear is fear. But, once learned, this lesson is rarely, probably never, forgotten; therefore, in the face of a prospect that appalls others, this man's reaction is to say, whether in a private conversation, or in a long public address, "I'll beat this thing."

Perhaps Franklin D. Roosevelt might have made the speech of March 4, 1933, if he had never suffered illness and never spent seven dreadful years struggling against its effect. But perhaps he couldn't. In any event, it is one plausible explanation of the amazing boldness which rallied a terrified nation to his standard, and, in the absence of any other, why should it be ignored?

Of course, if you are one of those who cherish the belief that virtue resides in the use of harsh language, you may say that he lied both times. He didn't beat it. No man ever completely whipped either poliomyelitis or economic paralysis. Roosevelt and Uncle Sam both walked limpingly seven years

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after their respective strokes. But they walked. Never let it be forgotten that their friends believed, with good reason, that neither the man nor the capitalistic system would ever walk again; and neither would have walked without grim resolution and superb courage.

It is no more than fair to interject, at this point, a disavowal of any intention to claim for Mr. Roosevelt exclusive credit for the accomplishments of the Hundred Days, and especially for the first ten of them. On the contrary, he did very little of the detail work, and a heavy share of it was cheerfully shouldered by men who hated him cordially.

One of the most memorable passages in Raymond Moley's memoirs is his description of that dreadful week when all hands were trying desperately to save all that could be saved of the banking system. Moley himself and William H. Woodin, the incoming Secretary of the Treasury, worked no harder than did Ogden Mills and Arthur Ballantine, outgoing Secretary and Under Secretary, both Republicans. Woodin began work before March 4 and Mills continued to work afterward; and the fact that for awhile Woodin worked under Hoover and Mills worked under Roosevelt made no difference to anybody. American partisan politics sinks to pretty low depths at times, but the republic has survived because whenever a real crisis has arisen there have been found men who ceased to be either Democrats or Republicans, either Roosevelt men or anti-Roosevelt men, but patriots and nothing else for the duration of the emergency.

Secretary Woodin at this time was already troubled by the

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throat condition that caused his death a year later, and it is Moley's conviction that this terrific week—he hardly went to bed at all through it—shortened his life appreciably. It is only too probable; and if it is true, here is at least one financier who has earned for his epitaph *Pro patria mori*.

The President enjoyed, in addition, the support of a well-disciplined and skillfully led party organization in Congress. Without it he could have achieved little or nothing. But the legislative history of the New Deal is a long and complex story in itself; to present it here, even in outline, would swell this volume inordinately without contributing anything save a narrative of parliamentary battles. These, although some of them were conducted with a skill, frequently on both sides, that gives them a lasting interest for historians, have little bearing upon the question of the essential Americanism of the New Deal. For the purpose of the present argument it is enough merely to enter upon the record a notation that at this time Mr. Roosevelt was ably and loyally supported in Congress; and during the very early, and most critical, part of the Hundred Days some of that support was rendered by Republican members who, like Mills and Ballantine, suspended their partisanship long enough to take whatever action was obviously necessary to save the country.

The banking crisis proper lasted just nine days. On March 13 banks in the twelve Federal Reserve cities re-opened; on March 14 those in 250 cities with recognized clearing-house associations; and on the following days those in other cities as fast as it was physically possible to make a pretty cursory

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examination. On March 12 Mr. Roosevelt made the first, and most famous, of his "fireside chats" over the radio, explaining in simple terms exactly what had been done, and why, and what was to follow. When the banks began to re-open the next day, despositors began pouring money into them faster than it was withdrawn.

The President had persuaded the people that only good banks would be allowed to re-open. The truth was, of course, that, as judged by the old banking standards, there wasn't a good bank in the country. The first element of the soundness of any bank is a reasonable measure of public confidence, and on March 4 no bank had it. But the men at the Treasury Department, working furiously over statements of assets and liabilities, were able to make out an impressive list of banks that ought to be sound given a little confidence, and the President's promise that the rotten banks would be kept closed supplied that confidence. A few mistakes were made at the Treasury, but not enough to destroy the newly created confidence; so the banks that were re-opened stayed open. In his first week President Roosevelt had given a better demonstration than Schopenhauer ever did of the world as Will and Idea.

Congress had been called into special session after a delay of exactly the time it would take a member from the Pacific Coast to reach Washington, that is, five days. It assembled March 9. The President laid before it a banking bill the draft of which had been completed thirty minutes before the special session met. It was, in effect, a sort of Act of Amnesty, giving legal sanction to what he had already done and au-

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thorizing him to proceed with the rest of his emergency measures. It was passed by both houses that afternoon and was signed and became law before nine o'clock that night—one of the fastest bits of major legislation enacted in the history of the country.

It had been Mr. Roosevelt's purpose to call a special session, but he did not intend to summon it until April, giving him time to settle down in the White House and to learn at least to know by sight most of the great officers of state. But when the banks crashed that was out, and there he was with Congress on his hands while half the bureau and division chiefs of the departments were as yet total strangers to him and he had no real, personal knowledge of more than two or three members of the Cabinet itself. It was a situation that must have dazed a man whose mind was not thoroughly made up; but Roosevelt knew what he wanted, and since Congress was already in town he proceeded to demand it in a rapid-fire series of messages that startled the legislators, bewildered the country, and drove the Washington correspondents half mad in their efforts to keep up with what was going on. Mr. Roosevelt himself has given, in "On Our Way," a summary of the legislation called for and promptly enacted during that time. The mere listing of the measures is enough.

On March 9, the day Congress met, he demanded, and got, the banking law.

On March 10 he demanded a 25% cut in the budget.

There intervened a Saturday and a Sunday on which no demands were made.

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On March 13 he demanded repeal of the Volstead law.

On March 16 he demanded the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

On March 21 he demanded the Civilian Conservation Corps.

On March 29 he demanded the Securities Exchange Act.

On April 3 he demanded the Farm Relief Act.

On April 10 he demanded the Tennessee Valley Authority Act.

On April 13 he demanded the Homeowners' Loan Act.

On April 20 he took the country off the gold standard.

On May 4 he demanded the Railway Reorganization Act.

On May 12 he signed the first Federal Relief Act.

On May 17 he demanded the National Industrial Recovery Act and the first appropriation of \$3,300,000,000 for public works relief.

There is the essential structure of the New Deal. It was laid before Congress in seventy days. Much of it was enacted almost as fast as it was presented, and all of it was completed within another thirty days. On June 16 Congress adjourned, exactly one hundred days after the special session opened, and on June 17 Mr. Roosevelt himself left Washington.

The years that have followed have witnessed certain extensions of the program and certain modifications in detail, but only one important reversal of policy, that embodied in the National Recovery Administration. In a case brought by a poultry dealer the Supreme Court held the act unconstitutional—a blow that rocked the New Deal momentarily and gave all the wits in the country an opportunity they seized



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with glee to discourse of the Blue Eagle that was killed by a chicken.

As to the view of this legislation taken by the country as a whole, there can be no two opinions. It was endorsed overwhelmingly in the election of 1936, and in 1940 the country discarded even the time-honored third term tradition to re-elect the man responsible for it. True, by that time the international situation had grown so threatening that the decision was not altogether clear-cut. Although Mr. Willkie took the same view of international affairs as Mr. Roosevelt, the violent isolationism of certain of his party leaders undoubtedly handicapped him. Nevertheless, if the country had actually been strongly against the New Deal it would have taken Mr. Willkie, in spite of the isolationists in his party.

As it was, Mr. Willkie carried only seven Middle Western farming States plus Colorado and, of course, intransigently Republican Maine and Vermont.

Yet there is a persistent legend that with these thirteen acts, including the abandonment of gold as a medium of exchange, which was accomplished by executive order, not by an act of Congress, Mr. Roosevelt somehow hoodwinked his party and led it into strange paths which it never would have followed had he not exercised his wicked enchantments upon it. Over and over he has been assailed for his repudiation of the Democratic platform of 1932, although he had said that he accepted it one hundred per cent, until that supposed repudiation has become a sort of article of faith among his opponents.

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Now as to whether the New Deal is, on the whole, good or evil honest men may differ; but if a man has accepted a party platform and has managed to get himself elected as the exponent of that platform, and then has followed a policy exactly the reverse of what the platform promised, honest men of all parties must agree that that is bad. No matter how successful it may be, it is bad. If this charge is substantially true, Mr. Roosevelt may be ever so popular, but he is not reliable.

The words "substantially true" are used by design, for no one contends that the charge is exactly true as touching every detail. For example, one plank of the platform called for repeal of the Prohibition amendment, and that has certainly been carried out. The question is, has Mr. Roosevelt repudiated so many, and such important planks as to reverse the spirit of the Democratic party's promises?

As it happens, the question lends itself to easy examination because the Democratic platform of 1932 was remarkable both for its clarity and for its brevity. It was, indeed, one of the best party platforms adopted in many years for the very reason that its makers abandoned almost entirely—not quite, but almost—the shifty practice of attempting to write a platform that will appear to be all things to all men and that actually means nothing to anybody. One could not ask for a more perfect illustration of this point than is afforded by the platforms of the two parties with respect to prohibition. The Democratic plank began with the sentence, "We favor repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment." It then advocated the use of the convention method of ratification, rather than ratification by the State legislatures and recommended Federal assistance

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to any State that chose to remain dry. Only a half-wit could fail to understand what it meant.

The Republican plank, on the other hand, began with a long preamble about the sacredness of law, the greatness of the Republican party as an upholder of law, a denunciation of extra-legal referenda, and a passage on freedom of conscience, finally getting around to this: "We do not favor a submission limited to the issue of retention or repeal, for the American nation never in its history has gone backward, and in this case the progress which has been thus far made must be preserved, while the evils must be eliminated.

"We therefore believe that the people should have an opportunity to pass upon a proposed amendment the provisions of which, while retaining in the Federal Government power to preserve the gains already made in dealing with the evils inherent in the liquor traffic, shall allow States to deal with the problem as their citizens may determine, but subject always to the power of the Federal Government to protect those States where prohibition may exist and safeguard our citizens everywhere from the return of the saloon and attendant abuses."

This fuzziness and ambiguity were not accidental: The Republican party had any number of men capable of writing every whit as clearly and succinctly as the Democrats. The purpose was to evade the issue, leaving the party's wet candidates free to be wet in wet constituencies and its dry candidates equally free to shout for prohibition in dry territory. Nor was the Republican plank anything novel in its shiftiness;

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on the contrary, it was much more like the traditional party platform plank on a controversial issue than was the Democratic plank.

The novel thing, the really marvelous thing, is the fact that the rest of the Democratic platform was very much like the prohibition plank. It contained eighteen promises, seventeen written into the draft and one added from the floor; and every one of them is terse and clear.

Nevertheless, it remained, after all, a political platform. The Democratic party had learned some sense in 1932, but it had not turned miraculously into a collection of saints and heroes. Therefore even this platform, admirable as it is, yet bears a few traces of the innate nature of platforms. Some of its eighteen promises are mutually contradictory. This fact unquestionably leaves Mr. Roosevelt open to a dig. He did say in his acceptance speech that he accepted not only the nomination, but also the platform "one hundred per cent." But he couldn't—not unless he was prepared to emulate Stephen Leacock's hero, who mounted several horses and rode off in every direction.

For instance, Promise Number One is, "An immediate and drastic reduction of governmental expenditures"; but Number Five is, "Extension of Federal credit to the States to provide unemployment relief." The curious thing is that both of these promises, actually impossible, Roosevelt carried out, technically. He did cut expenditures. Then he turned around and poured out money for relief in the several States. The net result was, of course, to render the cut in expenditures nugatory. But he did carry out the platform.

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As a matter of fact, as regards the eighteen promises there is no dispute over several. Number Seventeen, for example, was repeal of the Eighteenth amendment. That has been done. Number Fourteen called for independence of the Philippine Islands; that has been provided for, by no means to the unadulterated joy of the Filipinos, whose desire for independence has been somewhat dampened by recent events. Number Twelve demanded "The fullest measure of justice and generosity for all war veterans" who were actually disabled; the national conscience is pretty clear on that. Number Ten called for something very like the Securities Exchange Commission, and Number Eleven for the protection of depositors and the severance of affiliated securities companies from banks; this has been done. Number Seven called for financial relief to the farmer and control of farm surpluses; the relief unquestionably has been given and a terrifically expensive effort to control surpluses has been made. Number Sixteen demanded publicity for campaign contributions and enforcement of the corrupt practices act; there has been no great scandal about that. Finally, Number Eighteen, added by amendment from the floor, said, "We advocate the continuous responsibility of government for human welfare, especially for the protection of children." Anyone who would deny that the New Deal has assumed this responsibility must be addicted to strange reasoning processes.

The fact is, the charge that Roosevelt repudiated the Democratic platform of 1932 hinges upon his action with regard to five of the eighteen planks, the first four, and the ninth. They deserve study in detail.

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The first of them calls for "an immediate and drastic reduction of governmental expenditures . . . to accomplish a saving of not less than 25 per cent in the cost of Federal Government."

The strange thing is that he actually carried this out. All a President can do toward carrying out a platform plank requiring legislation is recommend it to Congress. This Roosevelt did on March 10, 1933—and it remained effective for six full days. On March 16 he carried out another plank of the same platform, the seventh, by calling for the AAA; and that, of course, canceled all the savings and a great deal more. Nevertheless, it, too, was part of the platform.

The second is "maintenance of the national credit by a Federal budget annually balanced."

On this point Mr. Roosevelt stands convicted. The impossibility of putting up an adequate defense here is not the fact that he did not balance the budget; he has reasons for that and they are certainly plausible and possibly sound. His real error was in making a tremendous assault upon his opponent based on Hoover's budgetary difficulties. For instance, in his radio address of July 30, 1932, he said, "Let us have courage to stop borrowing to meet continuing deficits. Stop the deficits." Right there he dropped the watermelon. He didn't stop the deficits, and he should have known better than to commit himself so definitely and dramatically.

Nevertheless, he did say, at Pittsburgh, on October 19, "Let me repeat from now to election day so that every man, woman and child in the United States will know what I mean: If starvation and dire need on the part of any of our

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citizens make necessary the appropriation of additional funds which would keep the budget out of balance, I shall not hesitate to tell the American people the full truth and ask them to authorize the expenditure of that additional amount."

In accordance with the traditional procedure of American politics, this is a defense, as against the charge of repudiation. In view of the long-established custom of party conventions to make the platform always ambiguous and frequently idiotic, it is essential to provide some way of escape for a candidate who wishes to talk sense. It has accordingly come to be regarded as quite correct for a candidate to put his own interpretation on the various planks, and if he states that interpretation clearly, and states it well before the election, he is entitled, after election, to construe the plank conformably to his own interpretation without laying himself open to the charge of repudiating the platform. In 1928, for instance, the Democratic party adopted a plank on prohibition as disingenuous and evasive as that of the Republican party in 1932. But the candidate that year was Alfred E. Smith, who felt strongly on the subject, and in a telegram to the chairman of the convention he served notice that he would not be bound by that plank. That gave the voters fair notice. If Mr. Smith had been elected, he would have been free to urge repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment without being guilty of party perfidy.

Mr. Roosevelt therefore has a good technical defense. If it does not quite clear him, it is because he repeatedly attacked Hoover on this very point. The truth is, what this incident proves against him is not perfidy, but ignorance. Even in the

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summer of 1932 he did not appreciate the full gravity of the situation. If he had done so, he would have been much more wary of attacking Hoover on the matter of the unbalanced budget. It must be admitted at once that this does not exonerate him. He should have known, and he didn't know; therefore he is convicted of an error of omission. But there is a difference between an error and a crime, in the realm of morals, if not in the realm of action. In the matter of the budget plank, Mr. Roosevelt is the engineer hoist by his own petard.

As a matter of fact, though, neither the economy plank, nor the budget plank, nor the two of them put together have stirred up half the fury against President Roosevelt that has been aroused by his asserted repudiation of the third plank. It promises "a sound currency to be preserved at all hazards, and an international monetary conference called on the invitation of our government to consider the rehabilitation of silver and related questions."

This apparently clear and straightforward plank was, in reality, the most devious thing in the platform. It was the result of a compromise. The Democratic convention of 1932 was dominated by inflationists; but it included a group of hard-money men whose ability was disproportionate to their numbers. The inflationists were aware that if they started a fight on the floor they might command enough votes to write into the platform a plank to their liking—they thought they might have the votes, but they were not certain of it. What they were certain of was that an inflationist plank would in-



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stantly bring into action a *panzerdivision* of the most skillful parliamentarians and the most powerful debaters in the Democratic party. These conservatives might be voted down; but it was beyond doubt that they would rip the convention apart, split the party, and perhaps hand the election to the Republicans as a gift.

On the other hand, the hard-money men, although they were strongly represented on the platform committee, were well aware that if they wrote the word "gold" into the platform they would set off an explosion that would certainly wreck the convention, and might easily wreck the party. They wanted to win. The Democratic party had been out of office for twelve long years, and its hunger for place and perquisite was ravenous. The cards were plainly stacked in its favor in 1932, if it could only manage to cohere until after the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. It was no time to be tossing political dynamite around recklessly. Hence it was by no inadvertence, but by careful design that the monetary plank of the 1932 platform does not contain the word "gold."

The locution, "sound currency," however, would offend nobody. The wildest greenbacker who ever advocated the issuance of pumpkin-leaves for money of course regards his crazy dollars as sound currency. So the platform advocated "a sound currency to be preserved at all hazards" and further to reduce the danger of an explosion the committee inserted the phrase about "rehabilitation of silver," which did not mean anything, but had, it was believed, a placatory sound. This makeshift served its purpose. The plank was adopted

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without incident, the candidate accepted it, and each faction of the party could persuade itself that it had won. The conservatives held, of course, that the words "sound currency" could not mean anything except what they held it to mean, and that the candidate was therefore pledged to preserve "at all hazards" a dollar containing 25.8 grains of gold nine-tenths fine. The inflationists, on the other hand, knew that the candidate was not pledged to the maintenance of the gold standard, and they knew why. Confident that the larger section of the party was with them, they hoped they could persuade or propel him into interpreting the words "rehabilitation of silver" as a mandate to put into effect the sort of program they desired.

The natural and no doubt inevitable result was that extremists of both factions later believed that they had been betrayed. Neither had been betrayed, but both had been denied. Mr. Roosevelt reduced the gold content of the dollar to 15 5/21 grains, thereby outraging the conservatives; but he insisted upon sticking to its gold content as the standard of value of the dollar, thereby outraging the inflationists—meaning the extremists on both sides.

As for the platform plank, though, it was carried out to the letter. Greenbacker and Gold Bug alike must agree that a sound currency is a currency that, when proffered in payment for goods and services will be willingly accepted by people who are under no police compulsion to accept it. In the case of the dollar, that means people not within the jurisdiction of the United States. An American is compelled by law to accept dollars in payment of any debt, but a foreigner

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is free to refuse them if he distrusts their value. It was on January 31, 1934, that Mr. Roosevelt reduced the gold content of the dollar, and he has held ever since the right at any time to reduce it still further. Even earlier, at the time of the London Economic Conference, he had definitely refused to pledge this country, even by implication, to a return to the old standard, or to any fixed and immovable standard; but if that has destroyed the dollar as a trustworthy medium of exchange, the foreigners apparently have not heard of it. Certainly they have not to this day exhibited any noticeable reluctance to accept dollars in exchange for their goods. In brief, Mr. Roosevelt was pledged to maintain a sound currency at all hazards. He has maintained the soundest in the world. Maybe it was the advent of war, maybe it was the rise of the system of barter, maybe it was just blind luck; but the point is that he promised to maintain it, and maintained it has been. Therefore it is impossible to convict him of repudiating his promise. Grant him only the Scotch verdict of Not Proven, if you choose; but you can't convict him on that count.

The bitterness with which this point has been contested probably is not extracted altogether from Mr. Roosevelt's course. If the conservatives grant that Mr. Roosevelt did not repudiate the platform, then they yield, not the President, only, but the party; for if the Democratic party, when it said "sound currency" did not mean a gold dollar of 25.8 grains nine-tenths fine, then, obviously, the party's thinking on monetary problems is not being done by the conservatives. In fine, the dollar of 25.8 grains has certainly been repudi-

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ated. If it was not repudiated by Mr. Roosevelt, in perfidious contempt of the platform, then it must have been repudiated by the Democratic party in writing that platform. It is more convenient—and safer—to indict the President than to indict the party; therefore Mr. Roosevelt must be held guilty at all hazards.

There is a possibility, however, that neither the hard-money men nor the inflationists, indignant as they both are with the President, have realized the half of it. There is a good deal of evidence that Mr. Roosevelt is, in reality, something that a Gold Bug would regard as worse than a Greenbacker, and a Greenbacker as worse than a Gold Bug. Sometimes he has seemed to cherish doubts that monetary theory is the backbone of economics at all. He has manipulated the currency to effect a particular purpose; but he has not relied on manipulating it to effect all his purposes. Obviously, then, he does not regard manipulation either as blasphemous, or as essential to salvation. There is a possibility that he regards it relatively lightly, as an instrument that may be useful occasionally but not very often. But this reduces monetary theory from the central position to the same level with many other phases of the national economy.

From the standpoint of a man committed to the theory that the monetary system is the necessary center of any economy, this is more appalling than any of the more familiar heresies. This is true, whether he himself is inflationist or anti-inflationist. If Mr. Roosevelt is, indeed, not much impressed with any monetary theory of any kind, then the wrath against him is easily understandable. It is as if, when the early Christians

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were contending furiously, the Homooousians, confident that the emperor accepted consubstantiality, and the Homoiou-sians, equally confident that he didn't, should discover that the emperor was in truth a pagan who said his prayers to Jupiter.

Perhaps Mr. Roosevelt thought very little of the currency plank one way or the other; but he carried it out.

The fourth plank of the platform of 1932 begins by advocating "a competitive tariff for revenue only, with a fact-finding tariff commission free from executive interference, reciprocal tariff agreements with other nations."

About this part of it there is not much dispute. The most conspicuous achievement of Cordell Hull as Secretary of State has been his success in negotiating reciprocal tariff agreements with other nations in the face of difficulties that were formidable to begin with and that have increased steadily as time passed. As for the "competitive tariff for revenue only" that has lost nearly all meaning in the face of quotas, the barter system and the increasing prevalence of the ideal of autarchy.

But this plank contained an additional phrase that has given rise, indirectly, to one of the heaviest and most damaging of all the assaults that have been made upon Mr. Roosevelt. The plank, after calling for reciprocal trade treaties, added, "and an international economic conference designed to restore international trade and facilitate exchange."

There is no question here of repudiation of the platform. The conference was called, and assembled in London in June,

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1933, the American delegation being headed by Secretary Hull. It was what Mr. Roosevelt did to the conference that has raised up a host of enemies, one of them being Raymond Moley.

He blew it up. He doesn't like to have it put that way; in Volume II of the "Public Papers and Addresses" he inserted a note referring to "a somewhat petulant outcry that I had wrecked the Conference." Petulant or not, the outcry was based on truth. He blew that Conference higher than Gilderoy's kite—so high, that it never did come down again. Incidentally, he blew up Secretary Hull and Assistant Secretary Moley with it. Like the Conference, Moley never came down again; but the Secretary apparently parachuted gently to earth. In any event, eight years later he was still in Washington, still one of the main pillars of the New Deal administration, and still enjoying the confidence of his chief. If his involuntary levitation has left any permanent scars, they certainly have not disabled him.

But Moley never was the same man again. He behaved very well in public, keeping his mouth shut in spite of a storm of unfair criticism, and continuing, for a few months, his official connection with the Administration. He had been appointed Assistant Secretary of State because, the President said, there seemed to be no statutory duties connected with that position, so its holder could be used anywhere. But from the time of the London Conference his attitude toward the President was different from that of the sometime head of the Brain Trust. More and more points of difference arose,

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and in the end Moley vanished entirely from the Roosevelt entourage.

One may reject Mr. Moley's point of view entirely and yet feel a certain sympathy for him. He was essentially a hard-money man. He was never an extremist. For instance, he consented to devaluation of the dollar as a necessary expedient without feeling that he was sinning against the Holy Ghost. But he believed profoundly, and doubtless still believes, that the monetary system is of such transcendent importance that no really coherent economic discussion is possible apart from it. There is no sufficient reason to doubt that he believed Roosevelt held a similar view. In all their discussions of financial matters they found themselves pretty well in agreement. They discussed, among other things, stabilization, and Roosevelt mentioned a figure at which he would be willing to see the dollar stabilized with relation to the pound.

What Moley did not understand—and whether it was his fault or Roosevelt's, the effect was the same—was that to the President's way of thinking there were a score of questions on the agenda of the Conference that should be given precedence over any discussion of monetary theory. To Moley's way of thinking, some sort of disposition of the monetary issue was essential before the Conference could be expected to proceed to anything else. With this bent of mind, he went to London, after the Conference began to drag, intent upon reaching some sort of agreement on stabilization that would dispose of the issue. He did not favor immediate stabilization,

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but he was all for removing that issue as an obstacle to the work of the Conference.

Mr. Moley himself doesn't believe that Mr. Roosevelt deliberately undertook to mislead him. Why should any sane man fool his own agent, whom he is sending on an important and delicate mission? But Mr. Moley does believe the President changed his mind, or that it was changed for him by Louis Howe and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Nevertheless, as early as April 26 the President and Prime Minister MacDonald, then in Washington, issued a fifth and final statement regarding their conversations as to the objectives to be sought at the London Conference. They were listed in this order: "The necessity for an increase in the general price level . . . Commercial policies have to be set to a new orientation . . . Central banks should by concerted action provide an adequate expansion of credit . . . Enterprise must be stimulated . . . and Governments can contribute by . . . programs of capital expenditure." Then, and not until then, the statement added, "The ultimate reestablishment of equilibrium in the international exchanges should also be contemplated. We must, when circumstances permit, reestablish an international monetary standard."

Mr. Moley did understand, however, that the President was against any immediate effort at stabilization, and with that he was inclined to agree. When he found, therefore, on his arrival at London, that it was entirely feasible to negotiate an agreement not only well within the level set by the President, but also postponing the date when stabilization was to be attempted—Secretary Hull and the delegation al-



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ready in London had already explored the ground that far—Moley assumed in what was beyond doubt perfectly good faith that the President's desires were fulfilled, and he incautiously indicated it, not to the members of the delegation, only, but also to the British. He was therefore standing right on the top of the mine when the Bombshell Message set it off. The message, a radiogram from the President, showed that Roosevelt, far from being pleased, was more indignant than ever because the Conference was insisting on talking money matters, first, and neglecting what he considered far more important subjects.

Poor Moley, of course, caught it from every side. The British were angry, bewildered and suspicious. Members of the American delegation were no less bewildered and some of them apparently inclined to suspect that Moley had played some kind of practical joke on them. The delegations of all the gold *bloc* countries raved, accusing Moley of having led them into a ridiculous position, while in America the opposition press pilloried him as a meddling interloper bent, for unknown reasons, on the humiliation of Secretary Hull.

Yet the explanation, from the President's standpoint, is simple. He believed that he was being taken for a ride by international financial interests. He had understood, as is evidenced by the joint statement, that he was entering a conference that was to give first attention to matters he considered much more important and "ultimately" perhaps to give some passing notice to stabilization at some time in the indefinite future.

The President considered this reasonable and right, be-

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cause he believed, rightly or wrongly, that the stabilization of international exchange is first valuable and most valuable to finance, as distinguished from commerce and industry. He certainly did not believe that the settlement of monetary affairs was the problem of first importance, and possibly he did not consider it of pressing importance. Yet here was the conference giving it first attention—in a somewhat hesitant and nebulous way, no doubt, but first attention. Mr. Roosevelt instantly decided that the London Conference was in the hands of international finance, and that if he yielded a single inch, he, too, would soon be in the hands of international finance. So he hurled his grenade, and Mr. Moley, Mr. Hull and the Conference ascended into the blue.

Now it is possible that in following this policy Mr. Roosevelt was, as John Maynard Keynes asserted, "magnificently right"; it is also possible that he was magnificently wrong. Men will decide largely on the basis of their economic doctrine; no decision will be attempted here.

For at this moment the question of whether the information on which he acted was true or false is less important than the manner in which he acted. It certainly exhibited three qualities usually regarded as desirable in a leader, to wit, promptness, resolution and courage. Once convinced, accurately or not, he swung his blade upon the Gordian knot at high speed. Moreover, he made it clear beyond misunderstanding that the case was closed, as far as he was concerned. In doing this he exhibited courage of two kinds. In the first place, he was demolishing a conference from which he had predicted much, which was bound to leave him in an un-

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favorable position in the eyes of the public; in the second place, he was leaving some sincere friends and faithful servants in an extremely uncomfortable spot. This takes more nerve, perhaps, than to face gibes from the public; but in his opinion it had to be done, and he did it. Incidentally, the friendship of his most valuable man in London survived the test; Mr. Hull took his beating, not only without a murmur, but without wavering for a moment in his loyalty to the President. In part this was based on a personal trait; Mr. Hull is a loyal man. But in part it was based on cold logic. Many years in public life had taught Mr. Hull that an organization of any sort is futile and ineffective without a leader, and the very violence of the shock he had received in London proved to him beyond a doubt that he had a leader who proposed to command. There was a moment in London when Mr. Hull was prepared to resign in wrath; but after he had cooled off a bit, and after certain misunderstandings under which he had been laboring were cleared up, it is probable that he developed a grim, but solid, appreciation of the ruthlessness with which the affair had been handled, even though he was a conspicuous victim of that ruthlessness. In any event, he stuck to his post and was still there when a far more serious international situation took men's minds off such matters as monetary theories, and even off the New Deal.

The next plank of the platform of 1932 which Mr. Roosevelt is accused of violating is the ninth. "We advocate," the party declared, "strict and impartial enforcement of the anti-trust laws to prevent monopoly and unfair trade practices,

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and revision thereof for the better protection of labor and the small producer and distributor; conservation, development and use of the nation's water power in the public interest."

What the country got, by way of fulfillment of those two promises, was NRA in the first case, and TVA in the second.

In the National Industrial Recovery Act the New Deal slipped and took a bad spill. This judgment is not based solely on the fact that the Supreme Court, when it eventually got around to it, declared the statute unconstitutional and threw it out. Long before that decision it had already become clear that the thing was not doing what it was supposed to do, and was doing a great deal that it most emphatically was not supposed to do; hence the Supreme Court decision was a godsend, rather than a blow, to the New Deal. It relieved the Administration of an Old Man of the Sea.

Nor can the fundamental error be fairly attributed to General Hugh Johnson, head of the National Recovery Administration, the agency set up to put the National Industrial Recovery Act into effect. It is true that the General annoyed a great many people. He was not given the expressive sobriquet of "Iron Pants" for nothing. He was noisy, he was aggressive, he was high-handed. But he was also honest, able and almost fabulously energetic. Before the Nine Old Men torpedoed him he had accomplished an amazing amount; but he was not making the NRA work, and if he couldn't it is improbable that anyone else could.

The initial error, the basic error, was made by none other than Franklin D. Roosevelt. In this matter for once he was guilty of proceeding on a false assumption and the best efforts

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of his subordinates could not correct that. The assumption was that American business is willing to assume and capable of discharging the responsibilities of self-government. It isn't.

To this day the President is inclined to believe that with some carefully drawn amendments, not reversing its general tenor, the law could have been made to work. The theory behind that law is that the men who have built up an industry are better acquainted with its problems than anyone else; therefore, if those men could get together and agree on certain codes of fair practice, the government would be justified in assuming that these codes did, in fact, represent fair practice and they could be given the force of law. To this the Supreme Court said, No; the people have set up Congress as the law-making authority, and Congress cannot delegate its powers and duties to anyone else.

The Court based its argument, of course, wholly on its interpretation of the Constitution; but its decision is sustained by the observation of many shrewd examiners of our political system, who think there is another reason why the NRA could not possibly work, regardless of what the Constitution says. This is the fact that it was based upon a very old American fallacy, the theory of what Walter Lippmann has called "the omni-competent citizen."

We may be a young country, but tradition dies hard among us. We have come by slow degrees to admit the obvious truth that some lines of work call for special aptitudes, but we still adhere to the belief that those lines are relatively few; there are still wide areas of the country where it is implicitly believed that any free-born American, although he may be

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hopeless as a brickmason or a plumber, can at least teach school, edit a newspaper, or govern the State. Beyond freedom from too intimate acquaintance with the inside of a jail the sole legal qualification which a politician must present in order to hold office is the larger number of votes. We tend to overlook the great number of extra-legal qualifications that he must have in order to get the votes; yet these contribute importantly to his success as an administrator, at least in the higher offices.

It is because we overlook these qualifications that we fail to realize that politics is a highly specialized occupation, which can be practiced successfully only by a man possessed of special aptitudes, which are by no means the same aptitudes that contribute to success in business. The American people are fond of thinking of their government as merely a great business; but it isn't. It is a government, and the two things are not in the same category. Business is business, but politics is an art. That is why the cry, raised in nearly every campaign, of "A business man for Governor," or "A business man for President," is not much more sensible than would be a cry for a business man for bishop, or a business man for Surgeon-General of the Army. A business man for banker, yes, and for all offices that have to do with banking up to the Secretaryship of the Treasury; but a doctor for the hospital, a cleric for the cathedral, and a politician for the White House and the Capitol.

Mr. Roosevelt betrayed his belief in this old fallacy when he approved the National Industrial Recovery Act; for that act called upon business men to undertake a task for which

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nothing in their training and experience had fitted them any more than anything had fitted them to play Hamlet. They were expected to step out of their offices, run down to Washington and perform a governmental operation of such enormous complexity and difficulty that it might have daunted a Congress composed of five hundred and thirty Roosevelts. They failed, of course. It wasn't for lack of honesty, or for lack of patriotism, or for lack of willingness to work. It was for lack of training.

Soon after the establishment of the NRA two things became apparent. The first was that the great basic industries, those whose adherence to the plan was most important, were encountering enormous difficulty in the formulation of codes. The second was that certain smaller industries that already were largely dominated by one man or by one corporation were uncannily prompt in presenting their codes. Suspicion quickly developed that some of these codes were carefully designed to extract the teeth of the anti-trust laws, rather than to confer any real benefit upon the industry. Some of the tightest little monopolies ever heard of began to be formed under the label of the Blue Eagle, symbol of the NRA. It seemed for a time that the speaker of the Commonwealth Club had himself cleared the way for the creation of "uncontrolled and irresponsible units of power within the state."

How did this man, of all men in public life, fall into any such error? He thinks that it was due to faulty drafting when the law was being prepared. In view of the infinite complexity of the subject, and the speed with which the bill was put together, it is certainly probable that there were plenty

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of errors in the drafting. It could hardly have been otherwise, unless one is prepared to grant the New Dealers a super-human perceptivity and logical power. Without doubt, therefore, the President can support his opinion with a great deal of specific and detailed evidence. Hence it is not impossible that he is right.

But there is another hypothesis that will account for the failure of the NRA—a hypothesis under which it had no chance of success, and would have had none even if the law, instead of being hastily thrown together, had been framed by the combined wisdom of all the great law-givers from Hammurabi to Hughes. This is the hypothesis that business men are, as a group, not competent to practice the art of government. To Mr. Roosevelt this suggestion would have seemed at the time, and perhaps still would seem nonsense. All he asked these men to do was to get together, agree on what seemed fair trade practices—not striving for perfection, but only for the minimum of regulation under which the industry could survive—and report.

That was all—but think what it implied in such industries as steel, coal, oil and the like. Each of them is riven by the fiercest sort of competition, not between rival companies, only, but also between rival ideas. These industries are full of men each of whom developed an idea many years ago and rose to eminence in the industry by driving that idea home with sledge-hammer blows. Mr. Roosevelt himself described them as “men of tremendous will and tremendous ambition.”

It was upon men of this sort that the Industrial Recovery Act thrust the job of making an almost endless series of deli-



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cate adjustments, of well-balanced compromises, of advances here and retreats there, of thrust and counter-thrust. It was a task calling for enormous resources, not of aggressiveness and determination, but of tact, persuasiveness, suavity and good-humor. In other words, it was a task to tax the capacities of the most skillful politician in the world—and it was turned over to business men. No wonder they made a mess of it. It was as unfair to expect them to make a success of it as it would have been to expect them to treat a case of infantile paralysis successfully. They simply were not trained for that sort of work. There is no question as to the complete sincerity of most of the men who struggled with the codes through that summer of 1933; but the more honest a man was, the less was he inclined to make compromises, even the most necessary; while the general confusion furnished a magnificent opportunity for the scattered few dishonest people involved to get away with murder.

Yet if it be granted that the NRA was not only a New Deal mistake, but a mistake from its very inception, its faults are not to be traced to its embodiment of strange and alien ideas. While the controversy about it was raging some people grew fond of interjecting into the discussion such words as "cartellization," "autarchy" and others with a Marxian, Leninist, or at least modern European flavor. But the flaw in the theory was not Marxian, Leninist, or modern; it was the old American fallacy of holding that anybody can be a County Commissioner because it takes no special training to succeed in the art of government. The code-makers were for the most part very good men indeed, some of them brilliant men, and

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the overwhelming majority honest men. But they were trying to perform governmental operations of great complexity and difficulty without having had any training as politicians; and they were given that work largely because Franklin D. Roosevelt insisted that it be given to them.

At his best, the President embodies the finest American traditions; and here is evidence that at his worst he still embodies American tradition, although a fallacious one. This is certainly to be expected. If a man is thoroughly American, he is characterized by American faults as well as by American virtues. So it is with Mr. Roosevelt. His wisdom he has drawn from the very sources that have strengthened the republic for a hundred and fifty years; and even his unwisdom is based on the sort of folly to which Jones, of Portland, Maine, Smith, of San Diego, California, Robinson, of Seattle, Washington, and Brown, of Jacksonville, Florida, are also addicted.

These are the points on which Mr. Roosevelt is most frequently denounced for having repudiated the platform on which he was first elected. But the Democratic party itself was deeply divided on the significance of that platform. Clear as it seems to be—unusually clear as it certainly is—it remains self-contradictory in some respects and ambiguous in others. Those who accuse Mr. Roosevelt of repudiating it mean that he repudiated their interpretation of it; but so did most of the party and so did most of the country. In 1936 the people, by a ratio of 27 to 16, announced that they were satisfied with Mr. Roosevelt's interpretation. Had any con-

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siderable number of the people regarded him as guilty of party perfidy, he would never have received any such act of amnesty. But they did not so regard him; Mr. Roosevelt's interpretation of the platform pleased the larger number of them. Since the object of a party platform is to attract voters, the man who interprets a platform in such a way as to attract a majority of all the voters in the country unquestionably has made that platform effective.

There is no point in attempting here an examination of the history of the New Deal in detail. The eight years following 1933 were no more than a time of application and elaboration of what was done in the Hundred Days. The governmental structure set up then has not been altered materially since, and almost everything that has been done since was started in that crowded period.

Naturally, the government was not administered for eight consecutive years without errors, some of them very serious and costly errors. One huge one was started on its calamitous way before the Hundred Days were out. This was the attempt to afford relief to the distressed under what was known as the Civil Works Administration. It was a bad plan that grew worse the further it was extended, and that had to be scrapped.

Mr. Roosevelt was not, of course, the sole creator of the CWA, but he consented to it, and his consent was an instance in which his optimism served the country badly. On March 4, 1933, the unemployment situation was appalling. We had not at the time—and, to our shame, we have not yet—any

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completely reliable statistical measurement of unemployment, but there is no doubt that at this time it ran far into the millions. Almost certainly ten, possibly fifteen, conceivably eighteen million workers were idle, and there were areas threatened with nothing less than famine conditions. Everything necessary to the support of human life was present in the country in abundance—often in too great abundance—but between the stored-up food and the hungry people there was an impenetrable hedge. The wreckage of the economic system, like bristling *chevaux-de-frise*, shut off the needy from the supplies. Obviously, something had to be done about this with all possible speed, and the CWA was the improvisation made to meet the need.

Its structure was not simple from the beginning, and it grew hopelessly complicated before the end, but the principle on which it operated is easily grasped. It was to call into consultation some local authority, perhaps the mayor of a town, perhaps the chairman of a board of county commissioners, perhaps a superintendent of public welfare, or the president of a board of charities—anyone who might be presumed to have accurate information regarding the local situation. Most of these people, naturally, were politicians of more or less weight in their home communities. They were asked how many people they could put to work if the Federal government would meet the pay-roll, and when they named a figure—all too frequently not an estimate, but a wild guess—they were authorized to go ahead and put them to work.

Mr. Roosevelt's undue optimism in connection with this scheme lay in his assumption that small-bore politicians, as

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a class, were possessed of both imagination and a decent regard for the miseries of the people and the necessities of the country. They were not. In the relief law it had been stipulated that the money should go to the unemployed, not to dealers in hardware and builders' supplies, hence a relatively small amount could be devoted to the purchase of tools. It soon became apparent that the average small-town mayor, given five hundred men with picks and shovels, but with no trucks, steam-shovels, concrete mixers, or even cement and trap-rock, had not the foggiest notion of what to do with them. It is easy to laugh at the mayors, but what would you do if you were given five hundred manual laborers, but no machinery, and ordered to put them to work tomorrow? What happened, of course, was that the country presently was resounding with jeers at the fantastic projects cooked up on the spur of the moment to give men at least the appearance of a job. A new word was added to the common vocabulary, a coinage of the Boy Scouts to describe a whole class of trivial occupations, the cacophonous and opprobrious word "boondoggling."

It was lack of imagination and resourcefulness that killed the CWA, although it had a blacker phase. Most of the local officials were honest, if unresourceful, but there were some—a minority, but numerous enough to taint the whole project—who saw in it only a magnificent opportunity to play politics. These, instead of making a sincere effort to relieve distress, promptly loaded the pay-rolls with their henchmen and hangers-on, paying the government's money to any rascal-lion who would promise political support.

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When the fatal defects of the CWA became manifest, the government replaced it as rapidly as possible with the better designed Works Progress Administration, and then, having obtained authorization from Congress to spend more money for machinery and supplies, it moved into the titanic building program of the Public Works Administration. But the change couldn't be made fast enough to escape the ill effects of the CWA. It was a blow to the New Deal; yet, given the emergency that existed, and the means at hand to deal with it, he who would say that he could have done better is a rash man.

After his second election, in 1937 and 1938, Mr. Roosevelt made two more errors, in the Surpeme Court fight and in what is popularly known as "the Purge" following it. These were, however, purely political errors, and their effects were felt by the President, only, not by the country. They are interesting, however, as the only important political errors the man has made since he first became a national figure.

It is frequently asserted that in undertaking to "pack" the Supreme Court the President sought to undermine the very pillars of the republic, introducing a manner of thought totally alien to American ways, and pouring contempt upon our most cherished traditions. What he had proposed was—along with a number of changes in Federal procedure, so obviously good that they eventually were adopted—a law permitting the appointment of an additional Federal judge whenever a sitting judge reached the age of 70, but did not choose to retire; provided, however, that the number of jus-

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tices of the United States Supreme Court should never be more than fifteen.

This is nothing unheard-of or unprecedented in the American system. The number of Supreme Court justices has been changed at least five times since the establishment of the court; and there is little doubt that in 1863, when the number was reduced to seven, and in 1866, when it was put back to nine, the consideration on which both actions were based was more political than juridical. If, then, the President actually wished to increase the number of justices for political reasons, he was within the field of American tradition, although it must be confessed a none too respectable tradition. The changes of 1863 and 1866 were made during the excitement of the Civil War and Reconstruction; and during that orgy of hate few precedents were set that later generations have found admirable or valuable.

The President had, however, another and much sounder argument. It was simply the common experience of mankind with senescence. The average man simply is not capable, after seventy, of severe and exacting labor, physical or mental. Of course there are Voltaire, Gladstone, George Bernard Shaw and Justice Holmes, all of whom did brilliant work after threescore years and ten. Of course there are many other magnificent old men whose careers are exceptions to the rule. But they are exceptions. The plain fact remains that the average man, after seventy, is incapable of the severe application by which alone a man in an extremely important position can discharge the duties of that position properly. Justices of the Supreme Court, to be sure, are never average

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men; they must have attained some distinction before they are even thought of for appointment to that bench. The proportion of vigorous old men among them is, therefore, very much greater than it is among the whole population; yet at that we have had a number of justices who have stayed on the Supreme Court too long. These cases have rarely become conspicuous because a decent human impulse, and a wise regard for the reputation of the Court have combined to induce his colleagues to do everything they can to veil the eccentricities of a senile justice from the public gaze. There have been such cases, however, and they were not only distressing, but detrimental to the welfare of the country. There have been many more such cases in the lower courts, where the judges also sit for life; hence a scheme whereby a Federal judge past seventy would be not replaced but supplemented with a younger man had much to recommend it.

It is not true, however, that the Supreme Court was senile in the ordinary meaning of the term in 1937. It was merely consistently and persistently blocking the New Deal program, frequently by five to four, the closest possible decision. It was Mr. Roosevelt's firm belief that in many of these decisions the Court had assumed to pass, not on the constitutionality, but on the wisdom, of the statute involved; which it has, of course, no legal, constitutional, or moral right to do. It is true that he had set up the framework of the New Deal in the Hundred Days, but the completion of the structure involved much complicated legislation. It was these statutes that were now coming before the Court, and if they were consistently thrown



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out it was possible for the whole New Deal to be heavily damaged, if not destroyed. He felt that a protest was in order, and his suggestion as to the personnel of the Court was his way of filing it.

But it was a mistake—not the suggestion, which really had a good deal to recommend it, but its sponsorship by a President, especially such a President as Roosevelt. During his first administration he had made enemies—not many, as the election returns showed, but extraordinarily virulent and extraordinarily vociferous. The New Deal had attacked privilege in many forms. The privileged have money and influence, or they would not be privileged; and people with money and influence can make a tremendous noise in the world. Every man whose income, personal power, or social position had suffered from the New Deal legislation naturally was hoping and praying for an opportunity to sink the knife into Roosevelt. But to do it out of plain revenge would bring reprisals; what was needed was an excuse to do it in a high and holy cause. In launching the Supreme Court fight the President afforded such men that opportunity. It was a mistake.

But it was a mistake for another more complicated and much more important reason. The New Deal had offended a good many honest men, as well as all the crooks. To explain how and why would require going into the history of the movement in detail, which would fill, not a volume, but a small library. The basic trouble, however, was simple enough—things just came too fast. An amazing number of people in the United States—not politicians, but ordinary citizens—

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are not prepared to oppose a single one of the major Roosevelt policies and yet dislike Roosevelt. He has not driven them in a direction they would prefer not to take, but he has driven them too fast and too far. As far as their rational processes are concerned, they have accepted the main things for which he stands; but they have not assimilated them emotionally. Hence, while they can tolerate the New Deal, they loathe the New Dealer.

To speed that was difficult must be added plenty of technical errors on the part of administration personnel. Every incoming administration fills Washington with new faces, but the New Deal did more than that—it filled the capital with new types. The old-fashioned politician was almost submerged in the tide, and even the genus vividly described in the vernacular as the Stuffed Shirt became appreciably less prominent. The newcomers were of all sorts, including many highly intelligent and able men, but also including some who would try the patience of Job; and when these were placed in positions, important or unimportant, where they came into contact with the public, they proceeded to spawn Roosevelt-haters with a fecundity that makes that of the rabbit seem the next thing to sterility. Many an honest citizen has gone to Washington in recent years full of good intentions and amiability, only to encounter some supercilious young squirt, sporting a shiny new Ph.D., and stuffed with such arrogance as can be developed only by those whose minds have gone stale through over-training. Of course, in such a case, the honest citizen ought to realize that the squirt is probably a fool, not for the lack of knowledge, but for the lack of sense;

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that he may be a really first-rate statistician, or bio-chemist, or specialist on the law of contracts; but honest citizens are human, and a good many of the young New Dealers—unfortunately, some of the older ones, too—give the impression of being anything else. So too often the outcome has been that the citizen, without changing his views on the main issues at all, has gone home blazing with fury and shouting for Landon, or for Willkie, or for Melchizedek for President—anybody but Roosevelt.

This undeniable weakness of the administration is attributable to the fact that when its enormously complex new policies were put into effect it was necessary to recruit great numbers of specialists in every imaginable line. Appointments were frequently made solely on the basis of the man's ability to do highly specialized work, with too little consideration of his ability to handle people. This accounts for part of the trouble, probably for most of it; but it cannot be asserted in honesty that this accounts for all of it. A certain number of out-and-out jackasses got into office, too.

Add together, then, the people, small in number, but very powerful and very noisy, whom the New Deal had compelled to disgorge; the very much larger number of Americans who, like Cousin Edgar in Harry Leon Wilson's story, "can be pushed just so far," and had been pushed too far; and the smaller, but still formidably large, number who had had unpleasant contacts with any of the myriads of new agents of the government, and it is evident that by 1937 there had been backed up a large pool of opposition to the New Deal, that needed only the breaking of the dam to sweep down

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with destructive force. The Supreme Court fight was the dynamite with which Mr. Roosevelt himself blew up the dam.

Perhaps it was inevitable that eventually he should come into collision with the Supreme Court. Every strong President in the history of the country has done so, soon or late. Theodore Roosevelt wanted to recall its decisions. Lincoln flatly ignored them. Jackson invited Marshall to enforce them himself. Jefferson's war with the Court was almost incessant. When either of the other co-ordinate branches of the government is under unusually strong leadership the Court is jealously watchful, as, indeed, it should be. More or less conflict is, therefore, practically certain. But Roosevelt's form of attack on the Court had the fatal defect of touching off the vast sentimentality of the American people. It seemed to be, or it could be construed as, an attack on tradition. Tradition is not a political issue; but precisely because it is not, a fight ostensibly in defense of tradition could be joined by all who hated Roosevelt for any reason. It was so joined, promptly and effectively.

Looking back upon it after four years one is tempted to say that never in our history have we had a more resounding battle with less reason. The President had no real need to start the fight. On the most critical decisions he had four members of the court with him, and death or resignation was certain to give him another, probably very soon.

By the same token, his opponents could not possibly stop him from eventually securing a majority of the Court, so far as a majority can be secured by appointment—which is, by the way, not very far. As a matter of fact today just two—

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Stone and Roberts—of the justices who sat on the bench in 1937 are still there. All the others have been appointed by Mr. Roosevelt.

With these facts in mind it is with a sort of stupefaction that one reads now the furious report with which the majority of the Senate Judiciary Committee rejected the suggestion. "A needless, futile and utterly dangerous abandonment of constitutional principle" it called what was, after all, only a proposal that an old judge be given the assistance of a younger collaborator. "It applies force to the judiciary and its final and ultimate effect would be to undermine the independence of the courts." How? "It violates all precedents in the history of the government"; but the Senators must have known that there were at least five precedents for changing the number of justices on the Supreme Court. "The theory of the bill is in direct violation of the spirit of the American Constitution"—even the furious Senators could not say that it violated the letter of the Constitution. "It undermines the protection our constitutional system gives to minorities and is subversive of the rights of individuals." But this is arrant nonsense; the Constitution expressly gives to Congress the power to alter the number of justices at will, and no proposal to exercise a constitutional power undermines the constitutional system.

Note well that the rejection of the President's proposal did not alter by jot or tittle the danger to which the Supreme Court is exposed of having its membership increased or diminished by statute. The President never had the power to do that. Congress had it, and Congress retains it. Congress

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can provide tomorrow that there shall be thirty-five, or three hundred and fifty justices, if it wishes to do so. Congress cannot remove a judge from the bench, save by the process of impeachment and trial, but it can provide by statute, and at times has provided, that in case of the death or resignation of a judge no successor shall be appointed. So it has the power to reduce, as well as the power to increase, the number. None of that was altered in the least by the Supreme Court fight. All it did, and all it could do, was serve notice that this Congress did not wish this President to appoint six new justices. Even that was futile. He has appointed seven.

Yet for months the country resounded with perfervid oratory that in the end convinced many good people that Roosevelt had concocted some sort of scheme to reduce the justices to the level of flunkies, or perhaps to replace Chief Justice Hughes with a modern George Jeffreys who would hold Bloody Assizes all over the country and fill Alcatraz with men who had done nothing worse than vote for Landon. It was nonsensical, of course, but it did have the effect of diminishing the confidence of the people in the President, although not enough to prevent the return of a Democratic Congress the next year and the re-election of Roosevelt three years later.

But although the fight was largely fraudulent, there is no denying that the President brought it on himself, and he made it worse by another tactical blunder the next year. This was an appeal to the people to defeat certain Senators who had been particularly obstructive of his plans. There, again, he set off an explosion of emotionalism that had nothing to

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do with political issues. There is a widespread prejudice in the United States against interference by the White House in State elections. President after President has demonstrated it, to his sorrow. Woodrow Wilson's famous appeal for a Democratic Congress is perhaps the most celebrated instance, but the thing has happened over and over again. A very popular President nearly always gets the impression that the people are willing to do pretty much anything he says. Hordes of his friends come to Washington from the State affected, assuring him that a word from him will turn the scales. Frequently it does, but it nearly always turns them in the wrong direction. The President is so powerful that when he singles out any individual for attack, that man immediately gains the sympathy that goes to the under-dog. So it was in 1938. Mr. Roosevelt's known opposition to certain Senators was immediately dubbed "The Purge" and most of the Senators were triumphantly returned to office.

Why, then, did he stage it? Well, it is possible to make an explanation involving the necessity of the maintenance of party discipline, and the President's double duty as party leader and protagonist of the general welfare. If a man has a program which he sincerely believes is necessary to protect the best interests of the country, then he is justified in employing every method of persuasion open to him to secure the election of legislators who will not obstruct that program.

The President's more ardent friends are persuaded that this is the explanation of the Purge. They may be right, although it should be noted that the elimination of these Sena-

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tors was not, in fact, necessary to the protection of the program. They were practically all re-elected; but nothing happened to the program. The cynical, however, hold to the simpler, and equally plausible, theory that he was angered, perhaps justly, by the persistent opposition of these men and flung a boomerang at them.

Assume, for the purpose of argument that this, the worse, construction is the right one. What are the implications? One is, of course, that Mr. Roosevelt is not so saintly that he is incapable of wrath; but this is hardly news. A second is that when he is what most of us call hopping mad, his judgment is not infallible and he is capable of making a political blunder. This, too, is in accord with the common experience; who is infallible when he is furious? But, whether or not these are accepted, there is a third implication that is inescapable; it is that the tremendous admiration of the American public for Mr. Roosevelt is quite consistent with independent judgment of his activities. He is, and he has been consistently for nine years, the most influential man in the nation, and by long odds; nevertheless, the same electorate that has supported him enthusiastically in three successive campaigns is so far from accepting his word as law that it is perfectly capable of slapping him down when it thinks he has exceeded his limited authority.

Read it any way you will, the defeat of the Purge was a rebuke to the President. When the German voters have administered a personal rebuke to Hitler, or the Italian voters to Mussolini, or the Russians to Stalin, one may begin to consider seriously the theory that Roosevelt, too, is a dictator.



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But a dictator who cannot liquidate a contumacious Senator politically, much less physically, is not worthy of the name.

Throughout these pages attention has been confined entirely to those phases of the New Deal to which the opposition professes to be based on principle. This means that only a fraction of its multifarious activities have been considered, and that the most important of them have been ignored; for obviously it was the ones that the people liked that swayed the votes in 1936 and in 1940.

There are, in fact, certain phases of the program—the Civilian Conservation Corps, for example, which put hundreds of thousands of jobless young men to work in the forests—to which there has been practically no opposition.

There are others to which the opposition is a matter of degree, not of kind. The most important of these is the spending policy. A great many people think the New Deal has spent too much for relief and recovery; but nobody claims that it should have spent nothing at all. Others hold that it has been much too friendly to organized labor, but nobody holds that it should have been unfriendly. There are those who believe that the New Deal has been a great deal too polite to Communists and other radicals; but, at least until the outbreak of war gave espionage a new and sinister significance, only an occasional Colonel Blimp favored the suppression of freedom of opinion.

This is entirely legitimate opposition, based on that difference of opinion which, Pudd'nhead Wilson assured us long ago, makes horse races. The New Dealers have their methods

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of answering it, but they are not relevant to this discussion because the sort of opposition that they arouse is not likely to paralyze the country's efforts in the face of a foreign threat. A man who opposes the New Deal because it has overdone a good thing is not filled with numbing fear of the unknown. In theory, at least, overdoing a good thing might eventually ruin the country; but not suddenly, monstrosly, and mysteriously, as the Weimar republic was ruined when Hitler came to power. We have seen excessive zeal before, and we know, in a general way, what to do about it.

It is not the purpose of this argument to try to convert any man whose opposition to the present regime is based on the ground that it has gone too fast and too far, although its general direction is the right one. Opposition of that sort, as long as it stays within the bounds of reason, is, in fact, desirable; for the New Dealers most certainly are not endowed with divine wisdom and their machine needs a good set of brakes as much as any other.

But there is another reason for not wasting time trying to convert those who oppose the New Deal in degree, rather than in kind. It is the incontrovertible fact that the New Deal belongs to history now. It is true that the President has declared that even the threat of war would not cause us to yield our social gains but, be it said with all respect, it is much to be feared that he was talking through his hat when he said it. In the face of war a nation always loses its social gains, and its capital gains, and its industrial gains, and its political gains, as well. Worst of all, it usually loses its moral gains first of all. War means loss, all along the line.

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What the President meant, of course, was that we shall not use the excuse of foreign war to demolish organized labor and social security and all the rest of it unnecessarily. But he realized clearly enough that the rise of a military threat has put an end, temporarily at least, to any material advance in the amelioration of social conditions. Since September 1, 1939, the attention of the nation has been too completely absorbed in the problem of its own defense to permit it to give any great attention to the sort of thing that agitated it during the Hundred Days.

The wisdom or unwisdom of the New Deal is for the moment, therefore, rather an academic question. It will arise again, no doubt, as soon as the present crisis is over; but there is only too much reason to believe that for the remainder of Mr. Roosevelt's third term we shall be concerned with matters in an altogether different category. It is what may reasonably be expected of the President in dealing with these matters that interests Americans today.

## CHAPTER VIII

**T**HERE was a period of approximately twenty-four hours in the year 1933 more fateful for the destiny of mankind than any other one day in the century.

A little after noon on March 4, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States. Before midnight on March 5, 1933, the German Reichstag had passed the Enabling Act, putting absolute power into the hands of Chancellor Adolf Hitler.

Eight years later these two men faced each other as the champions of two ways of life so antagonistic that the world is not wide enough for them to exist together in peace. In 1933 not many people were able to perceive any relation whatever between them; but in 1941 not many doubt that one of these men is destined to destroy the other, and it is not beyond the bounds of credibility that they may destroy each other. Hitler has said that the outcome of the duel between the systems they represent will fix the destiny of mankind for a thousand years, and it is by no means certain that his assertion is extravagant.

If Mr. Roosevelt is described as the chief protagonist of the way of life preferred by the democracies it is not by his

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own choice, nor by reason of his personal superiority to other democratic leaders. The man who saved Britain in her desperate hour, for example, has attributes of mind and character that make it preposterous to rate him as inferior to any man alive; Mr. Roosevelt's resources, not Mr. Roosevelt himself, give him the central position in the present situation. Mr. Churchill does not have available twenty-five million men of military age, nor a national income of seventy billion dollars, nor the incomparable industrial plant of the United States, nor three hundred and fifty-nine million acres under the plow. The last reserves of the free peoples are the forces commanded by the President of the United States.

But there is another reason why the President, rather than the Prime Minister, is the central figure on his side. The President shares the quality that has made Hitler strong; he is associated in the minds of the masses with the dynamic, rather than with the static, theory of government. Churchill is a conservative. That doesn't mean that he is a less ardent believer in human freedom than Roosevelt; but it does mean that his first care has always been to preserve what is best out of the past. But it was revolt against the abuses of the past that heaved both Roosevelt and Hitler into power—and that has demolished a dozen other governments. The people who revolted do not associate a victory of Roosevelt with a return to the old conditions. As a matter of fact, neither would a victory of Churchill involve such a return, because the old conditions are demolished, and there is no possibility of returning to them. But Roosevelt has no desire to return

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to them, and all the world knows it; hence a movement led by him cannot possibly be branded as counter-revolutionary.

If there is anything certain in human affairs, it is certain that he did not envisage the present situation on March 4, 1933. He had plans, indeed, that were wide-spreading and far-reaching; but peace is the first prerequisite to the development and perfection of that sort of plan. "Adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people" is work that cannot be performed with artillery, tanks and bombing planes. This is not to say that he wasn't aware of the possibility of war, even eight years ago. He is not feeble-minded, and every man above the intellectual level of a half-wit has been aware of the possibility of war ever since firing ceased in 1918. But the President, like the majority of the American people, rejected war as an instrument of national policy. It was present in his mind, as it was in the minds of most of us, as a calamity to be avoided as long as possible, not as an opportunity to be carefully studied and considered.

Therefore, if he is now the chief leader of democratic resistance to totalitarian aggression, it is a position he never would have chosen.

His antagonist is the man who devised it. It is doubtless true enough that Hitler never intended to face Roosevelt under the circumstances that now exist. Difficult as it is for us to believe it, Hitler evidently thought that he could defeat Britain by psychological weapons, and then face Roosevelt, or whoever happened to be President of the United States, with all, or nearly all, the power of Europe solidly organized behind him. But the destruction of free govern-

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ment in this country is a necessary part of any plan of world domination, and Hitler must have envisaged it from the beginning.

Yet in the month of March, 1933, the positions of the two men were strangely similar. Both had risen to power on the crest of a wave of protest set in motion by the same sort of grievances. Both took over countries economically in a state of collapse and visibly disintegrating socially. Both faced the problem of putting millions of idle men back to work immediately, and the even more urgent problem of putting some spirit into an apathetic and despairing people.

There were other similarities. In Germany, as in America, the people were not so much aflame with enthusiasm for the new leader as inflamed with wrath against the old ones. In Germany, as in America, the gravamen of the old leaders' offense was not so much what they had done as what they had failed to do. In Germany, as in America, the indictment of the old leaders included a multitude of counts, but there as here they may all be summed up as failure to obey the injunction of the Constitution of the United States "to provide for the general welfare." Finally, in Germany as in America, the new leader, largely because he was new, was given *carte blanche* to do what he thought best.

If we came out with the New Deal and the Germans came out with Nazism, the main reason is because we had chosen the author of the Commonwealth Club speech and the Germans had chosen the author of *Mein Kampf*. There is at least this much in the "leadership principle."

Even if you are one of those who regard the New Deal as

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Americanism at its worst, it is still Americanism. However distorted you may think its ideas, they are still ideas whose origin is to be found in the Constitution and the *Federalist*, not in Wagnerian opera. Its traditional hero is Mr. Jefferson, not Wotan; and Mr. Jefferson, with all his faults, was recognizably a statesman, and not a baritone singer seven feet high with cow-horns on his hat. We may have come off badly, but at least we came off with something that looks more like a government than like a lunatic stage-manager's setting of the Ride of the Valkyries.

The protest that brought both Hitler and Roosevelt to power has been described by Mrs. Anne Morrow Lindbergh as "The Wave of the Future." No doubt it is, but it is also the same old wave that has surged up in the past under the same stimulus. Since the beginning of recorded history, the king has never been conceded a right to demand allegiance of his subjects except as he could, and would, protect them from dangers against which they could not protect themselves. The feebleness of royal authority in feudal times was due to the fact that it was the baron, not the king, who protected the people; so it was the baron, not the king, to whom they gave allegiance.

From the beginning until quite recently what the ordinary subject had reason to fear most was a man with a sword in his hand. Hence it was from armed marauders that he demanded protection—of the baron, of the king, of anyone who could afford it—and to the protector he gave his allegiance.

In this respect human nature has not changed; what has changed is the enemy. In modern times, and especially since



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the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the ordinary man has had less reason to fear human robbers with tangible weapons than the impersonal, intangible operations of the economic system. Yet death by starvation is still death by starvation, whether the proximate cause is the irruption of a band of men-at-arms who have ravaged a peasant's farm and taken away all his food, or an economic collapse that has deprived a workman of any chance to earn a living. A king who was not strong enough to put down robber bands could not command the faith and loyalty of his subjects five hundred years ago. A government not clever enough to prevent starvation through economic wreckage cannot command the faith and loyalty of its citizens today. This truth does not apply to the United States and Germany alone; Russians and Italians, Frenchmen and Spaniards, react the same way.

The witchcraft delusion in Salem was no more baseless than the delusion widely prevalent today among the more fortunate classes that the people of the modern world are making new and unprecedented demands upon government. The demand of the people is the same old demand that has been made of every ruler since the days when Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees, to wit, effective protection against thieves and murderers so that the people may enjoy the fruits of their labor. What is new is the method by which theft and murder are accomplished. Against this new method the king's men and the king's gallows are not effective; for the crime is accomplished without the necessary intervention of a conscious human agency. It is the machine age, in which even theft and murder are perpetrated automatically; and

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who is to hang for it when men are caught in the machinery and mangled, untouched by human hands?

The government owes no man a living, but it does owe every man protection of his life. It incurs this obligation when it exacts of him loyalty and support; and the obligation has never been denied. As far back as human records go it has been acknowledged that when the ruler can no longer protect the subject, the subject is released from his obligation to support the ruler. In 1933, in Germany and in the United States, millions of men were threatened with death by starvation because the government did not know how, or did not dare, to protect them from the economic forces that were destroying them; so, in both countries, the people revolted against the government. But this was certainly nothing new, nothing without precedent; on the contrary, it has been the common fate of every government guilty of a similar failure.

But it was none the less a sinister thing. It was the old nightmare that has haunted the dreams of every ruler, and of every ruling class since organized government was established. For time, and time and time again, it has been demonstrated horribly that when the *Jacquerie* once gets out of hand, there is no limit to its ferocity, nor to its stupidity. It was this that Alexander Hamilton had in mind when he declared, "Your people, sir, is a great beast!" Leaderless, or led by scoundrels, a people *is* a great beast, capable of rending its friends as readily as its enemies, incapable of distinguishing virtue from vice, patriotism from treason, philanthropy from rapacity. Time, and time, and time again it has been demonstrated that a popular movement that starts from the depths cannot

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be stemmed, cannot be dammed, cannot be arrested. It can be guided, but only by the highest political skill; and rarely, indeed, is it so guided. New? Why it is the oldest terror that organized government knows.

Perhaps it is the supreme triumph of the American genius for self-government that in this crisis the American people turned to a man of their own blood, steeped in their traditions and a sincere believer in their way of life. The Germans, on the other hand, turned to a foreigner, little acquainted with the true greatness of Germany, and contemptuous of what he did know. The Germans were perhaps the more logical; since the old system had failed them, why not turn to a man as far removed from it as possible? The old system had failed the Americans, too, but they listened to a man who insisted that the system was basically sound and could be made to work satisfactorily by the use of different methods.

Once in power, though, the two leaders began to diverge at once. Perhaps the essential difference in their philosophies is that Roosevelt believed that the wreckage with which he was surrounded was due, for the most part, to stupidity, whereas Hitler believed that the wreckage of Germany was due to crime. Roosevelt realized that the wealth of America had been dissipated and lost. Hitler believed that the wealth of Germany had been stolen. Roosevelt's aim, therefore, was recovery; Hitler's aim was recapture. One leader said to his ruined countrymen, "Let us make." The other said to his, "Let us take."

They agreed, however, on one point, which was that the sacredness of private property is not absolute, but is conditioned

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on the safety of the nation. Neither hesitated, therefore, to spend enormous sums to establish national safety. By 1939 Roosevelt had spent about forty billion dollars over and above the ordinary operating expenses of the government, and Hitler had spent a sum which, owing to his incomprehensible methods of accounting, cannot be determined with precision, but which is generally supposed to range between ninety and a hundred billions.

But Roosevelt spent the bulk of his money on such matters as roads, bridges, dams, powerhouses, irrigation projects, schoolhouses, land reclamation and reforestation. Hitler spent the bulk of his on arms. This was the natural result of the difference in the two men's aims. Roosevelt proposed to restore the prosperity of the American people by creating new wealth. Hitler proposed to restore the prosperity of the Germans by taking other people's wealth away from them. In view of Hitler's plans, perhaps Roosevelt would have done better to spend his money on arms, too, but who would have believed it in 1933?

In the end, of course, Hitler forced his scheme on all the world. Under modern conditions no one nation can afford to devote even the major part of its energies to planning for peace while another large nation is furiously preparing for war. People are always referring to this as one of the inherent weaknesses of democracy, but it is hard to see where there is anything in it peculiar to democracy. It is rather the weakness of every nation, democratic or not, that cherishes the concept of the citizen-state as opposed to the concept of the bandit-state. There is no apparent reason why a benevolent

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and intelligent despot should not regard his domain as a member of a larger community, a citizen of the world-state. Up to 1939 the Russians, for instance, vociferously proclaimed that this was precisely their concept of the position of their totalitarian regime; and until their attacks on Poland and Finland revealed the insincerity of the claim there was so much evidence to support it that many Americans at least half believed it.

There is a school of thought which holds that in this Hitler was the realist, and Roosevelt the idle dreamer, whose drowsy amiability is the real source of his nation's peril. This is the school of the moral defeatists, which has surrendered in advance the principle that is the very cornerstone of American political philosophy. For if men not only lack at present, but are forever incapable of developing the capacity to manage their own destiny intelligently, then the Constitution of the United States is nonsense and the republic itself a futility and a fatuity. Logically, this doctrine is not impossible. Perhaps we are essentially bestial. Perhaps there is in us no capacity for self-government, not even latent. But this is not the doctrine of the republic, hence a man who holds it is not eligible to be President of the republic. A man who holds that office must take it as axiomatic that intelligent self-government is possible, that liberty is an attainable ideal, that a continuing elevation of the cultural level of the masses is practicable, that the people are capable of drawing steadily closer to justice. He must frame his policy on this basis, and not on the basis of barbarism, unless the threat that is offered by barbarism is so close and so plain that none can doubt the

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necessity of turning to meet it. Roosevelt undoubtedly foresaw the possibility of war in 1933; but he would have been no American had he thrown all the energies of the country into preparations for a war still so far away that few of the people perceived it at all.

In any event, the moment Hitler marched into Poland it made little difference what Roosevelt regarded as the wise course through which to repair the damage of the economic and social collapse. At that moment the threat of barbarism did become plain. From that moment the thought and energy, as well as the money, of the country had to be applied in ever-increasing proportion to the problem of national defense. The New Deal is a peace-time program. The moment the threat of war overshadowed the land it had to be held in abeyance. Mr. Roosevelt tacitly admitted that when he appointed to head the War and Navy Departments, and the enormously important Office of Production Management, men who were not New Dealers and not even Democrats.

It is undeniably true, therefore, that of the two great antagonists who came to power in 1933, Hitler was the winner, up to the summer of 1941, not on the field of battle only, but in the field of governmental theory, as well. He had forced Roosevelt to abandon his own course and follow that of Hitlerian Germany—that is, the diversion of the national energies from the problems of peace to the single task of creating as rapidly as possible the most formidable military power possible. The Commonwealth Club speech has been set aside, and *Mein Kampf* is the order of the day.

There are some Americans pessimistic enough to believe

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that this represents the loss, not of a battle, only, but of a campaign. Strongly anti-New Deal, they hold that the six years and the forty billions devoted to that program represent losses that have weakened us dangerously as we face the menace from abroad. This feeling is natural, doubtless inevitable, in a man who dislikes and distrusts everything Roosevelt has done from the start; yet even in such a man it is hardly justified by the facts.

Grant, for the sake of argument, everything this man asserts. Grant more than has ever been asserted by reasonable anti-New Dealers. Grant that the New Deal was downright criminal, which none except those driven maudlin by hatred of Roosevelt have ever asserted. Nevertheless, the fact remains that twenty-seven million American voters, a clear majority of the whole, more than 55 out of every 100, believe the contrary so strongly that they trampled down the hitherto sacred third term tradition in order to re-elect the chief New Dealer. If, as few observers doubt, the prejudice against giving any man a third term cost Mr. Roosevelt several million votes, then even the tremendous figure of twenty-seven million does not represent all the American voters who believe that the New Deal was a move in the right direction.

As William A. Dunning pointed out years ago, to understand history one need not necessarily know what was true, but one must know what men believed to be true; for men act on what they believe. The fact that there were no witches in Salem is not what caused certain women to be hanged there in the seventeenth century. The fact is quite irrelevant to the hangings; it was the belief that put Jack Ketch to

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work. Now the belief prevails in America that Franklin D. Roosevelt found a promising method of protecting the common man against the danger of being robbed and murdered through starvation, not by human bandits, but by the impersonal forces of an ill-designed economic system. These people are profoundly convinced, therefore, that democracy is not an impossible way of life, even in the machine age of finance capitalism. Roosevelt was making it work, wasn't he, until Hitler came along and interrupted him? Let us dispose of Hitler, then, and we can make it work again.

It is important to eliminate Hitler's armed forces as menaces to our peace and safety; but it is vastly more important to eliminate Hitler's ideas if we are to enjoy peace for any considerable length of time. But an idea is impervious to bayonets and bullets. It can be killed only by another idea. Now Roosevelt has given a majority of the American people the idea that democracy can be made to work to the satisfaction of the average man, and this idea, whether true or false, is a powerful prophylaxis against infection with the idea that the only hope for common people is embodied in "the leadership principle," the "master race," the "protection of the blood" and all the other fantasies of which Germany has been so fearfully productive in recent years.

The twenty-seven million may be deluded, of course, but the New Deal has given them faith that the American system is, or can be made, the best system of government as yet devised. Being full of faith, they are full of fight. In that sense, the country was being well armed during those six years when more money was going into bridges and school-



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houses than into tanks and battleships. The anti-Roosevelt man, assuming that he is himself profoundly American, can take satisfaction in this. Without those six years, most of the people might not have been so jubilantly confident that theirs is a government worth shedding their blood to preserve. In consideration of this, much can be forgiven by a patriot, even though he is an anti-New Dealer.

As a matter of fact, now that the lines are drawn, not as between Democrat and Republican, but as between American and foreigner, most of us are disposed to welcome those phases of government which we can point out with pride to a foreigner, more than those which we can criticize privately at home. But the years of terrific domestic battling have obscured from its opponents even the incontestable merits of a group that they oppose. Let it never be forgotten that for eight years it has been politically, and sometimes financially, profitable to paint the New Deal as black as possible; and when blackening is profitable no one need doubt that a good job will be made of it.

Surely it is not mere Democratic propaganda to point out, at this time, those features of the Roosevelt administration which even its opponents admit are not bad, and which shine brilliantly when contrasted with the regime which it now opposes. There have been many things in Washington during the last eight years in which any American can take pride, no matter what ticket he votes, and which he can justifiably emphasize when it is a matter of his country against any

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other. Certainly now is the time to remember them, without regard to our domestic differences.

The first and greatest of them all is, in fact, to be credited only in part to the New Deal. This is the sharp rise in the level of political debate during the last eight years. The New Deal, simply because it has challenged many long-established concepts, has forced a reconsideration of the fundamentals of our political system, which has been reflected in all public debates, but especially in those on the floor of the United States Senate. It is doubtful that the intellectual level of the present Senate is conspicuously higher than that of the Senates of the twenty years prior to the New Deal; but its debates have been markedly above that level. The answer is that a Senator of mediocre intellectual attainments, when he is talking about something important, talks better than a brilliant man who is talking without anything to say. For the last eight years the Senate has had before it a succession of great constitutional questions which could not be discussed at all without some cerebration, and which could not be discussed adequately without long and severe mental effort. As a result, the Senate has talked well.

Perhaps it is not to be listed among the great periods of the Senate. Few would compare it, for sheer brilliance, with the days when Old Bullion Benton stood in the Senate like a bull in the ring, tormented but deadly dangerous, while the incomparable picadors, Webster, Clay and Calhoun, circled around and around, prodding him. But it certainly was far above the period when the Republican leader, Senator Smoot, could fill hours of the Senate's time and columns in

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the newspapers with his horror at discovering a dirty book; and when Heflin, the Democrat, could gain country-wide attention and waste other hours by hurling billingsgate at the Pope. Of late the Senate at least has had too much to do to spend its time considering either "Lady Chatterly's Lover" or the religious prejudices of Alabama. This may be an indication of more distress in the country, but it is certainly an indication of more thought in the Senate.

It would be grossly unfair to any nation, Heaven knows, to insinuate that its intellectual capacity is to be measured by its political oratory; but that there is some measure of correlation between the two admits of no doubt. It is a fairly safe generalization to say that when political oratory bears any appreciable trace of intelligence, the country is thinking hard; on the other hand, when political oratory soars into stratospheric altitudes of idiocy, it is a fair inference that the country has grown weary of thinking and is tending to substitute emotion for reason. We have had some dreadful exhibitions at Washington within these years; yet it would be no bad gamble to tear a leaf at random out of the *Congressional Record* for any day in the past eight years, and bet on its containing more evidences of reasoning power than a set speech by any high party official of the Nazi regime.

What is true of the Senate debates is applicable, in a measure, to political debating in general for the period. Neither Mr. Landon nor Mr. Willkie, Mr. Roosevelt's opponents in the Presidential races of 1936 and 1940, is a pettifogging type, but if either had been that sort of thing would not have served, for nobody thinks of Mr. Roosevelt as a petty mis-

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demeanant. He may be pulling down the very pillars of the temple, but he certainly is not running away with the altar-cloth.

It would be silly to imply that the advent of this President has converted Washington into a serious rival of the Old Academy, but it is sober truth that it has driven Americans to a more careful consideration of the first principles of government than any other administration of recent years. Among other things, it has had the effect of restoring some validity to party divisions. It is true that the old party names of Republican and Democrat are still untrustworthy guides to a man's political philosophy, as they have been for thirty years and more; but the terms, New Dealer and anti-New Dealer, have meaning. Republicans and Democrats are frequently indistinguishable; but there is a difference between New Dealers and anti-New Dealers.

Another characteristic of the New Deal about which there is no dispute is its notable freedom from the grosser forms of misconduct in office. The spending that has gone on in Washington has been unapproached in time of peace; but the stealing there apparently has been confined to the petty cash and to officials of the rank of clerks and office boys. There have been peculations of considerable size. Several cases have been prosecuted, and it is highly probable that more have been successfully covered; but the stealing was not done in Washington. All the important cases that have come to light were discovered where construction work was going on, or funds were being distributed for other reasons

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out in the country, not under the eye of the administration chiefs.

Nor has the partisanry that unquestionably has stained the record been most blatant and unashamed in Washington. Prodigious efforts were made to connect James A. Farley, while he was Postmaster-General, traditionally the Cabinet post of the Politician-in-Chief of the administration, with the improper use of relief and recovery funds for partisan purposes; but none was successful. Of course, this did not acquit him. There are people with whom it is an article of faith that Jim Farley bought the election of 1936 with relief funds; and they are quite unshaken in that belief by the complete lack of evidence. If an archangel were Postmaster-General there are people who would believe that he had played dirty politics and was too smart to get caught at it.

It is strange that men are unable to perceive the self-stultification that this belief involves. Anyone who believes Mr. Farley, or anyone else, could buy the American electorate, necessarily believes that the republic is rotten to the core. If the people in the mass are purchasable, then democracy is a fraud on its face, and ought to be abolished forthwith. A man who believes the election was bought has no sound reason for opposing Hitler, or any other conqueror who will reduce a venal nation to the satrapy that is all it deserves to be. A man who believes the election was bought is an apostate American who has repudiated the faith on which the republic was founded. Of course there are men of intelligence and personal integrity who do believe that the republic is thoroughly rotten, and that democracy is a sham

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and a fraud; but every such man of my acquaintance is also opposed to universal suffrage and to the continuance of the American political system in general. Most of them see no point in opposing Hitler. It is possible to retain respect for such a man, as it is possible to recognize the ability in war and statecraft and the many admirable personal traits of the Emperor Julian, who also was an apostate. But when a man in the same breath proclaims his faith in democracy and his belief that the election was bought, it is impossible to retain respect for his intelligence, whatever one thinks of his sincerity.

The truth is, of course, that Jim Farley all but dislocated his spine leaning backward in his effort to avoid the use of relief funds for party purposes. There is never a doubt that the smaller fry in some of the States were less scrupulous. Some open scandals resulted, and there were evil smells from States where nothing was ever brought to light. But no Cabinet officer was involved.

The noteworthy lack of stenches in the air of Washington ought to be peculiarly gratifying to Americans at this time when they remember the appalling fetors that every breeze from Berlin has brought to their nostrils for eight long years. When the official press was through describing, after the blood purge of 1934, the official and private characters of the men who had stood next to Hitler in the Nazi hierarchy, the average American was pretty well convinced that any plain embezzler or bribe-taker would be disgraced by being found in such company. But is there really anything extraordinary in this situation? Is it not, indeed, an old and fa-

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miliar pattern? When, in all human history, has a revolutionary movement concentrated all power in an individual without being attended by an upheaval in the moral, as well as in the political realm? There is a tradition that Nicholas Lenin ruled in an atmosphere of puritanical austerity, and so, apparently did Oliver Cromwell; but both men are regarded as remarkable on that account. Ordinarily the dictator, for the very reason that he has overthrown the regularly constituted government, is forced to make use of some worse than dubious instruments; and these questionable fellows usually disgrace his regime.

It is incontestably true that the irregularity of a man's private life is not a reliable measure of his ability as an administrator. A man may violate every provision of the moral code and still be as great a statesman as Talleyrand. On the other hand, a man may live a rigidly correct private life and still be a Torquemada. But it has happened frequently enough to be called the rule that the establishment of absolutism in any nation is swiftly followed by just such stories as have been coming out of Berlin.

We are not hearing from Washington well-authenticated tales of misappropriation, bribe-taking and embezzlement; of misuse of the sword of justice to gratify private spite; of perjury in the highest places, and cynical betrayal of trust; of great officers of state employing the methods commonly attributed to Al Capone during the prohibition era. Still less are we hearing whispers of disgusting personal habits among the leaders of the government; of strange orgies in official residences; of drug addicts in high office; of men convicted

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of infamous crimes put in positions of command; of perversion and degeneracy among those who bear the honors of the nation. Mr. Roosevelt himself has been accused of many things, but no one as yet has suggested that there is anything epicene about him, nor has he been seen gnawing the carpet in a fit of hysteria.

It is fatuous to account for this with the smug assertion that such things simply couldn't happen in America. They could happen, and they would happen, fast enough, if there were in Washington a government possessed of supreme power and holding itself accountable to no one. Indeed, they could happen in Washington faster than anywhere else for the simple, but sufficient, reason that there is more wealth in Washington than anywhere else; and when the swine are in control, their swinishness is in direct proportion to the amount of wealth they find at hand. The relative inoffensiveness of the air in Washington is the most conclusive evidence of all that no dictatorship, but an accountable government, aware that it may be brought to book, holds sway there.

Finally, there is one accomplishment of Mr. Roosevelt which his opponents ordinarily dislike even to consider but in which, at this juncture, they may find a certain comfort. This is his remarkable success in nationalizing our domestic politics.

Franklin D. Roosevelt is the first Democratic President since the Civil War who did not need the support of the Solid South in order to win. He has been supported by the South, to be sure, but that support was not essential. In any, or all, of his three campaigns he might have given his oppo-



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nent the entire electoral vote of the eleven States that formed the Confederacy, plus the vote of the border States of Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, and yet have been elected easily. This is a consideration that naturally annoys Republicans under ordinary circumstances, but under the circumstances that exist at present it has a certain non-partisan value. It proves that our representative in the crisis is a national figure, and not a sectional hero who obtained national office by a political fluke. There is no possibility of a split in our ranks because one section of the country suspects the President of being Jeff Davis in disguise. This gains importance as it applies to a situation in which unity is the first essential.

There is something more than a jest in the apothegm that he who would know the sturdiest manhood in all America should study a Vermont Democrat or a Georgia Republican. The strength of character that can sustain defeat after defeat with no yielding of conviction, that can fight campaign after campaign with no hope of success, and that can bow to the will of the majority without a thought of bowing to its wisdom, is part and parcel of the bedrock on which our political institutions are based. To suggest to a man who has believed all these years that Mr. Roosevelt is wrong that he should now change his opinion simply because for the third time most of the people have declared that they believe Mr. Roosevelt is right, is more than an insult to the man; it is an insult to the very spirit of Americanism. A man who based his vote for Willkie on conclusions reached after carefully weighing

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all the facts, and nothing but the facts, would be a poor American if he changed his opinion simply to conform to the election returns.

But Americans without regard to party feel an obligation to support the President—any President—whenever the nation is threatened from without.

Not all the inhabitants of this country accept that obligation; but not all the inhabitants of this country are Americans. Not even all the natives are Americans except in a strictly technical sense.

There are some men so blinded by partisan passion that they would rather see the nation remain in peril than see it delivered by a member of the other political party. But they are partisans, not Americans.

There are some so steeped in class and caste prejudice that they would prefer to see Hitler lord of America than see American workmen gain another inch. But they are Tories, not Americans.

There are some so eaten by avarice that they fear a dictator less than they fear the doctrine that property is not as sacred as the duty of the government to see that famine shall not slaughter the poor. But they are not even civilized men, much less Americans.

No one would waste words on these, any more than one would waste words on those who have secretly transferred their allegiance to Hitler, or to Mussolini, or to Stalin. In time of war there is a person officially designated to do all the talking to these people that is necessary: he is the provost-marshal.

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To Americans, though, who must support the President, it is not an insult, it is a relief, to consider in as favorable a light as they can the qualifications of the man whom fate has made their leader during the critical years ahead. The fortunate people, of course, are the majority who have believed in Roosevelt from the start. They need no reassurance for they have no doubts; they can, and do, face the future calmly confident. But in what can a member of the minority find reassurance; judging the future by the light of the past, what can he reasonably expect of Mr. Roosevelt, not as the leader of the New Deal, but as President of the United States charged with the duty of assuring the safety of the nation against the threat of physical force?

Well, he can expect the first and most essential quality of courage. Whatever else may happen to the man who represents our side in this clash between two worlds, he will not be appalled. Infantile paralysis is a more terrifying devil than Hitler, but Roosevelt faced it. Economic collapse is more terrifying than a bombing raid, but Roosevelt faced it. Whoever may blench, whoever may quail, as we plunge into the fog and smoke, we may rest assured that the man at the top is not afraid, for he has seen worse than this, yet come through all right.

By the same token, we may expect resolution—this on the testimony, not of Mr. Roosevelt's friends, only, but on the even more enthusiastic testimony of his enemies. They call him the stubbornest man alive. Perhaps this is where his Dutch ancestry counts. At any rate, if he could battle seven long years to reach the point where he can walk limpingly

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and could battle seven years more to bring the country to the point where it could get about without crutches, is there any doubt that he will fight quite as stubbornly to prevent the enslavement of the American people? No, another thing that is certain is that the man at the top will not quit.

In addition to courage and resolution, we may expect inflexibility. This will be denied. The idea is firmly imbedded in many minds that Mr. Roosevelt is a master of sinuosity and deviousness, but the idea has been created and propagated by two classes of people, first, those to whose interest it was to make him seem so, including, of course, his political opponents; and, second, those who have put into Mr. Roosevelt's mouth words he never spoke, and into his mind ideas he never held, and have denounced him for not adhering to these things. An example was furnished by the isolationists with their denunciations of the President for breaking his promise to keep us out of war. Of course he never made any such promise, any more than he promised to maintain 25.8 grains as the weight of a gold dollar. He said that he hoped to keep us out of war. He said he would do all that lay in his power to keep us out of war. He said he would never send an American soldier to fight in a foreign war. But no man, not an utter fool, would make a flat promise to prevent war, and Mr. Roosevelt is no fool. Neither did he say that he would never send an American soldier to fight on foreign soil. No man not a fool would make that promise either. On the contrary, any man not a fool knows that if we must fight, we are lucky indeed if we can fight on foreign soil, instead of on our own. The ideal is to do all the fighting on the

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enemy's soil; but anything is better than fighting on one's own.

Mr. Roosevelt is a politician, and any politician whose ethics are examined by the standards of a doctor of moral philosophy is pretty sure to show some wavering along the edges. But doctors of moral philosophy do not get elected President of the United States. If it is immoral to accept a man's support simply because he does not, or will not, understand the English language and insists on putting his own false interpretation on plain words, then Mr. Roosevelt is guilty; but so is every man who has held the office of President.

As it happens, the test of this man's straightforwardness is not difficult. Let any fair-minded man take the Commonwealth Club speech, in which he said what he was going to do, and lay it alongside the record of what he actually did—omitting his whirlwind action during the banking crisis, which was not contemplated when he made the speech. The exactness of the parallel between promise and performance will bear comparison with the record of any politician whatsoever, not excluding either Lincoln or Washington.

Mr. Roosevelt has declared that this nation, while he directs its foreign policy, will not submit to domination of the world by Hitlerism. That's that. Whatever else happens, we may rest assured that the man at the top is not going to flatten us with a sudden announcement that he has made a nonaggression pact with Hitler.

All this, of course, still leaves plenty of doubts. Whether or not Mr. Roosevelt will make a good Commander-in-Chief in time of war I don't know. Neither does anyone else. It all

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depends upon whether he can tell the difference between a general and a stuffed tunic, and that can never be determined with certainty until his selection has been tested in actual battle. They all look alike on the parade ground. Whether Mr. Roosevelt can spur the armament industry to maximum production I don't know; but I do know that he will be accused of fumbling the production program. I also know that if the President were not Roosevelt, but Tubal Cain, father of all workers in metal, he would be accused of fumbling the production program. From now on, denouncing the fumbling at Washington will be one of the easiest ways of impressing the credulous and making oneself seem important. There will be fumbling enough, God knows; but for every fumbler the denouncers will be twice as numerous and ten times as loud. It was so in Wilson's day. It was so in Lincoln's day. Indeed, as far back as 712 B.C. (according to Archbishop Ussher), the Prophet Isaiah was complaining, "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy." Let us bear this in mind.

If there is no way of indicting a nation, neither is there any way of acquitting one. We have our full proportion of fools and blatherskites in this country. But, disregarding them, I believe the American people may justly call heaven and earth to witness that they face this crisis as free of the lust of conquest and domination as any people that ever looked into the abyss of war. The right to exist as a free people is the beginning and the end of our demands. The President,

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as our leader, has not asked, "When do we get in?" or "Where do we get in?" or "What do we get out of it?" His question from the start has been, "Must we get in to safeguard our national existence?"

The editors of the London *Economist* ended their inconclusive attempt to define the New Deal with these words: "Mr. Roosevelt may have given the wrong answers to many of his problems. But he is at least the first President of modern America who has asked the right questions." He is always at his best in a crisis; and in this greatest crisis of all, he has certainly asked the right question.

As a nation we are full of imperfections and it is only too likely that the stresses and strains of the next few years may reveal them horribly. But such as we are, we intend to remain, not that we cherish any crazy delusions of being a "master race," and not that we have any God-given mission to regenerate the world, but because we know that the things we value we have created by our own methods and in our own way; and we are certain that if we submit to dictation all that is worth having will slip from our possession, and we shall never again create anything that is excellent or worth the world's attention. We are aware that in determining to live our own national life in our own way we are challenging the aggressors; for even one nation of freemen is a standing reproach and a perpetual menace to all tyrannies. But shall we apologize for living?

Not now. Not while we remain American. Not under the leadership of a man who, whatever his faults, is at least bold, resolute and inflexible; whose roots are buried deep in Amer-

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ican soil; whose blood is American blood, and whose hopes, and desires, and ideals, and dreams are of and with and for America. Let us stand to arms, then, steadily; knowing that under our latest President, as under our first, we have raised a "standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the rest is in the hand of God."

THE END



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Is Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the American tradition or a dangerous innovator without precedent or predecessor?

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